

Attractions

MANAGEMENT

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Volume 29 Issue 3 2024

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Reality**

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VAC – the Annual National Conference of Visitor Attractions – will take place in its recognised home, the fantastic QEII Conference Centre opposite Westminster Abbey in London.

At VAC 2024, 30 expert speakers will explore topics such as...

- Market Insights, Trends & Growth Markets for 2025
- Operations & Marketing in a Cost of Living Crisis
- The Business of Sustainability & The Green Agenda
- The Overseas/inbound market for UK Attractions
- HR, Recruitment & Retention
- Attractions Innovations and excellence
- Talking Tech & Digital Marketing
- Attractions Product Development and Diversification
- AI and its implications for attractions
- Latest Tourism Legislation and Policy in the light of the new Labour Government
- Excellence in Visitor Communications
- VisitEngland & VisitBritain briefing
- LVEPs and visitor attractions' role in them

Speakers already confirmed for VAC 2024 include:

- **Katie Vosper**, Director, BVA BDRC
- **Bernard Donoghue OBE**, Chief Executive, ALVA, the Assn of Leading Visitor Attractions
- **Paul Kelly**, Chief Executive, BALPPA, the British Assn of Leisure Parks, Piers & Attractions
- **Joss Croft OBE**, CEO, UKinbound
- **Juliana Delaney**, CEO, Continuum Attractions
- **Liz Terry MBE**, Managing Editor, Attractions Management
- **Andrew Stokes**, England Director, VisitBritain
- **Louise Stewart**, CEO, Chester Races
- **Richard Toomer**, Executive Director, The Tourism Alliance
- **Dominic Wray**, Director, Blackgang Chine/Vectis Ventures
- **Emma Robertson**, Programme Manager, Railway 200
- **Satpal Chana**, Deputy Director of Data, Analytics & Insights, VisitBritain
- **Neil Lewin**, Managing Director, Semantic, on AI for marketing attractions

www.vacevents.com

Better together

The spa and attractions industries are seeing increasing crossover, with a range of creative projects. It's exciting to see where this might lead



Over the past few years, our team has been seeing an increasing number of projects that straddle the attractions and spa industries in our reporting for *Spa Business* magazine – sister title to *Attractions Management* (www.spabusiness.com).

The technologies used in visitor attractions have huge potential to heighten the spa experience, while the rapid growth of the spa industry and growing interest in wellness means it makes sense for attractions to get in on the act.

On page 68, we interview Meow Wolf co-founder Corvas Brinkerhoff, who recently announced his departure from the experiential art company to create his own immersive spa experience.

Brinkerhoff plans to use his background in creating mind-bending exhibits to design spa experiences that not only entertain guests, but also deliver lasting benefits to their quality of life.

This disruptive project – called Submersive – is set to open in Austin, Texas in 2026, bringing together elements of a traditional spa with AI technology, video projection, immersive art installations, lasers and other sound and light effects.

"It's essentially a massive 'state-change' machine," says Brinkerhoff. "An art creation that you can literally submerge yourself into and that heals you."

The Therme Group has been in on the act for a while now too, with its waterpark/spa hybrid projects that combine water-based activities with wellbeing treatments, art, nature and technology.

Canadian studio Moment Factory recently designed a unique new digital aquatic experience as part of French theme park Futuroscope's new waterpark (see our interview with CEO Sakchin Bessette on p28).



Brinkerhoff straddles spa and attractions with his new venture

IMAGE: KATE RUSSELL, COURTESY OF SUBMERSIVE

“The spa and attractions industries are filled with creativity and innovation”

The Louvre and the Tate Modern have hosted yoga classes, while the Areal15 entertainment space in Las Vegas offers a wellness programme in a music-filled space wrapped with immersive 360 degree projection-mapped visuals.

There are also Japan's onsen 'theme parks', and art collective teamLab's work that brings together art and sauna in innovative ways. And it's still just a concept, but many will appreciate Jellyfish Studio's hybrid rage room and spa experience, designed to help women get over bad breakups.

The spa and the attractions industries are both filled with creativity and innovation. In the space that lies between them is a world of possibilities.

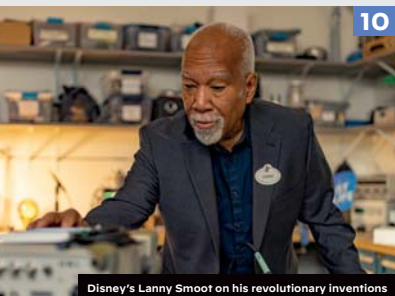
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PHOTO: LISA WHITING



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PHOTO: DISNEY ENTERPRISES, INC.



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PHOTO: MOMENT FACTORY

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The challenges of designing the first Dragon Ball Theme Park

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The Meow Wolf co-founder is bringing together immersive technology, art, neuroscience and spa bathing in a unique new concept

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Visiting zoos and aquaria inspires people to act more sustainably, finds a study from the University of Sheffield and Chester Zoo



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The new generation of vertical attractions

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Creating the Elvis Experience



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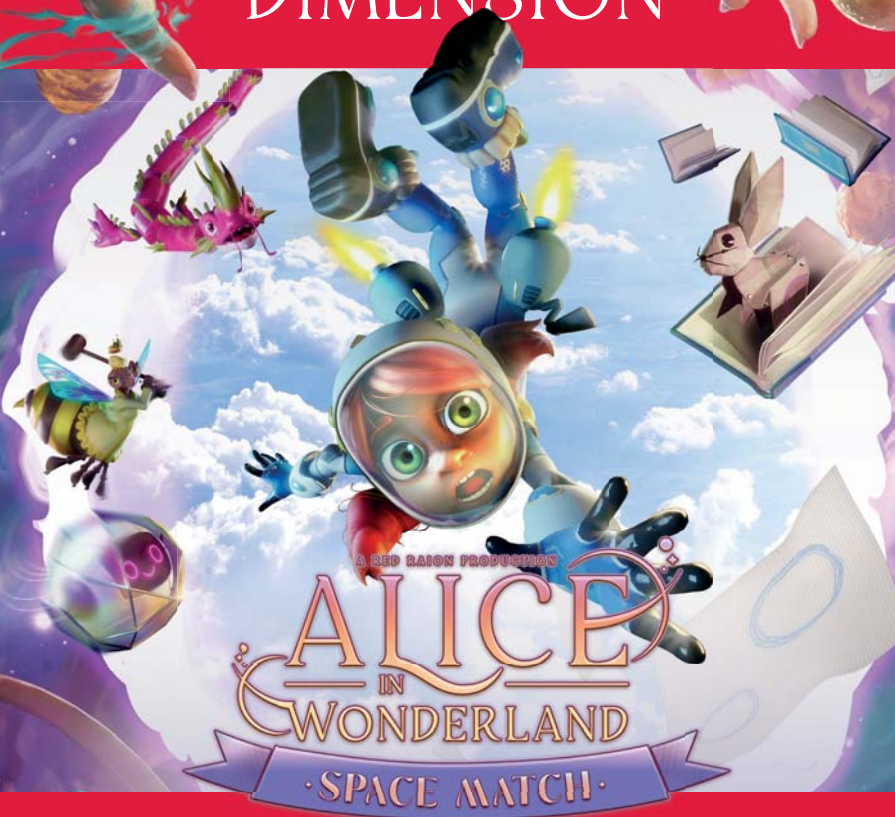
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I believe that what youths can see, they can be

Lanny Smoot, Disney Research Fellow & Imagineer, the Walt Disney Company

Following a decades-long career with Disney, Imagineer Lanny Smoot has been inducted into the National Inventors Hall of Fame. His time at Disney has seen him create inventions that include the extendable lightsaber used by Disney Live Entertainment, X-ray flashlights and the interactive Magic PlayFloor aboard Disney Cruise Line's *Disney Dream* and *Disney Fantasy* ships.

With more than 100 lifetime patents, Smoot is the Walt Disney Company's most prolific inventor and is only the second person from the Walt Disney Company to be inducted – the first being Walt Disney himself, who was honoured posthumously in 2000 for the multiplane camera.

Smoot is currently hard at work on the HoloTile – a multidirectional floor inspired by the Holodeck in *Star Trek* (Smoot is a big *Star Trek* fan). The modular floor is made up of a series of circular tiles that shift and rotate as people walk on them, and it enables multiple people to use it at the same time without interfering with one another's experiences. The technology has been hailed as a major advance in theme park and virtual reality technology, with potential applications including shared virtual reality spaces, theatrical productions and theme park rides.

Smoot spoke to *Attractions Management* about what the honour means to him, his latest invention and addressing the lack of diversity in the industry.

What does it mean to you to be inducted into the National Inventors Hall of Fame?

An inventor being inducted into the National Inventors Hall of Fame can be equated to an actor receiving an Academy Award. It's the epitome of recognition for those of us who love to think up new ideas, and to bring them to life.

When I first learned of my induction, I was extremely happy, especially as I thought that I was the first person at the Walt Disney Company to have received the honour. Soon after, one of our Disney media specialists told me that I was not the first person to receive the honour, rather Walt Disney himself was the first. Instantly I felt a lump in my throat and was completely humbled, as I realised that I was receiving an honour that only Walt himself had received at our company. ▶



Lanny Smoot has been inducted into the National Inventors Hall of Fame



The HoloTile Floor could have huge potential for the attractions industry

PHOTO: DISNEY ENTERPRISES, INC.

PHOTO: DISNEY ENTERPRISES, INC.

The HoloTile Floor will allow people to walk in real or fantastical environments in an unlimited manner

What have been the highlights of your career with Disney up to this point?

The highlights revolve around having worked on several classic attractions in our theme parks, for instance, enabling Madame Leota – a disembodied head inside our Disneyland Haunted Mansion that used to sit on a Séance Table – to fly over the table to the amazement of our guests.

I've created changing portraits that instantly transform from pleasant to ghoulish at the Disneyland Haunted Mansion, and I've contributed to the Finding Nemo Submarine Voyage attraction at Disneyland.

My technologies have allowed guests to learn how to battle laser blasts with the world's most realistic, fully extending, super-bright lightsaber, and I created an attraction that allowed guests to use X-Ray flashlights to learn how to keep their homes safe from fire hazards [Where's the Fire in Epcot's Future World].

Do you have an invention that you're proudest of?

The project that I'm most excited about is one I'm working on now – it's what I have called the HoloTile Floor. It can move any number of objects (or people), on its surface in any direction.

When people wear VR headsets on the HoloTile Floor, they're effectively in the Holodeck, a place where they can walk around in real, or fantastical environments, and in any direction in an unlimited manner. They won't walk off the floor's surface or bump into others on it. In the not-too-distant future, this technology may help virtual reality gamers to stop tripping over the coffee table.

What excites you most about the HoloTile Floor?

We see the HoloTile Floor as a jack of all trades, for instance allowing dancers on a HoloTile-equipped theatrical stage to move in ways that would be impossible on an ordinary stage. It will also enable Disney Imagineers to step into their architectural creations even before they're built. This will shorten design times and make for even better products.

Can you share details of anything else you're working on?

I'm always working on multiple ideas at the same time. I recently created the technology behind our Water Harps at the Journey of Water attraction at EPCOT at Walt Disney World. These allow our guests to strum streams of water as they play the strings of an actual musical harp.





Smoot got a Thea Award for his work on Finding Nemo Submarine Voyage

You encourage students of colour to pursue careers in STEM. People of colour are also under-represented in the themed entertainment industry. How should this lack of diversity be addressed?

I believe that what youths can see, they can be. When I was a child, I did not have accessible role models such as working engineers.

My father was a bit of an itinerant inventor, and when I was quite young – only five years old or so – he introduced me to electricity by bringing home a dry cell battery, a bell and a small light bulb.

My father got the bell to ring and the bulb to light up – that light lit my entire career in engineering and the sciences.

I was very lucky to have that early exposure and I believe that early exposure to many more kids would bring more young people of colour into the area of theatrical technologies, as well as all industries.

Where and when are you happiest?

I'm happiest when I'm in an electronics lab, with a fresh new idea in hand. ●



Smoot's highlights include a lightsaber and Madame Leota's floating head

The lowest moment was the day of the fire – seeing the plumes of black smoke and thinking it was all gone

Donna Speed, CEO, We The Curious



n 9 April 2022, a fire broke out at We The Curious science centre in Bristol, UK. Caused by damage to the attraction's photovoltaic solar panels – likely

caused by birds – which triggered a fault in the electrical system, the fire spread to the roof, resulting in significant fire and water damage to the roof, second floor and building systems.

We The Curious was closed for more than 800 days, while the complex, multi million pound repair project took place. During the closure, staff carried out free outreach activities in schools and communities across Bristol, with more than 260 events taking place across the city.

On July 2 2024, the centre reopened featuring a new programme with more than 200 activities across two floors of interactive exhibits, a 3D planetarium with several new shows, and a new café, new quiet room and new multi-faith room.

The summer programme includes the £6.3 million exhibition Project What If, based on gathering more than 10,000 questions from people across Bristol.

Here We The Curious CEO Donna Speed shares the unexpected highs and lows of the past two years, what she's learned from the incident, and offers some sage advice on remaining connected to visitors during periods of closure.

Donna Speed joined We The Curious in 2000 and became CEO in 2019

We The Curious reopened
in July 2024 after being
closed since April 2022

What's new at We The Curious? Have you used the restoration to make any major changes?

Lots has happened over the last few years – most of the work that's taken place is behind the scenes, so visitors may or may not notice much of a difference.

Our building was badly damaged during the fire in 2022, with extensive water damage which got into every part of our building, including the heating, cooling and electrical systems – which all had to be replaced.

We also had to replace our roof and rebuild our second-floor event space, as well as reinstating all of the exhibition floor and 200 exhibits to how they were before the fire. It's been a very big job.

During that time though, our exhibitions team have been refreshing some of our favourite exhibits, and the foyer and shop have been completely re-configured. We've also installed a new solar panel array which will provide 12 per cent of the energy needed for our building, a significant step forward in our pledge to be carbon net zero by 2030.

What has been the hardest part of We the Curious being closed for so long?

For me, it was the fact that we'd only just reopened after 14 months of closure due to the COVID-19 pandemic, with a brand new



£6.3 million exhibition: Project What If. It's such an amazing exhibition and we're so proud of it – not being able to share it with our visitors has been tough.

What have been the biggest challenges of the recovery programme? Have there been any unexpected learnings from the fire and the closure?

The fire damage was relatively easily repairable, although we needed to replace our roof, but the water used to extinguish the fire caused massive damage to our building systems, which has meant that all of our electrical, heating and cooling and ventilation have had to be replaced. This is what has taken most of the time over the last couple of years. Mercifully the exhibits themselves were largely unharmed. ▶



The centre features more than 200 science-based activities

DANIEL WATKINS

Opening times:

Tuesday – Sunday:

10:00 – 17:00

during termtime

Daily: 10:00 – 17:00

during school holidays,
with timed entry slots

Price:

Adult (age 16+) £18.50,

Child (age 3-15) £12.65

Activities include:

Project What If Inspired by real questions from the people of Bristol, Project What If is an invitation to escape into a mysterious world of possibilities in a space where art and science collide. Peer inside the TARDIS, come face to face with an early ancestor in Sand, or meet the resident robot in Soul

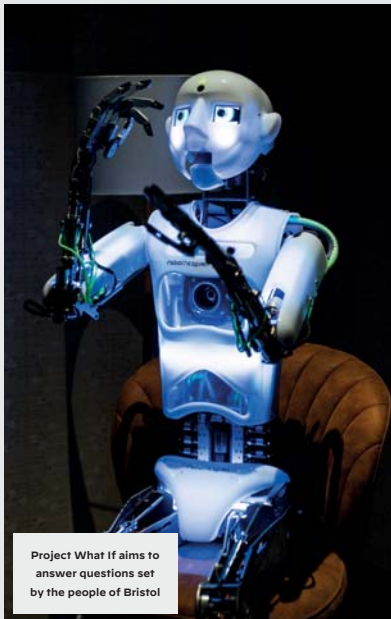
The Planetarium The UK's first 3D digital planetarium, with presenter-led shows for a range of ages, including seasonal

stargazing show Colossal Cosmos, an expedition across the solar system, and a new under-6 show

Impossible Possible From seemingly impossible conditions for plants to grow to climate crisis issues and the secrets of shopping, the activities help to explore the concept of Impossible/Possible in all its forms by working together to tackle seemingly impossible challenges

Open City Lab, Shopping Trolley Secrets Visitors can explore the links between the items on the shelves and real-world research in this on-site science lab

Hidden Health Here Visitors can lay on an arcade machine, cuddle a giant soft sculpture and write their own personal message on a cloud



Project What If aims to answer questions set by the people of Bristol

LESA WHITING

The unexpected lesson learned was the power of purpose. As soon as we closed, we asked ourselves how we could continue our mission as a charity. This led to us immediately pivoting to deliver a comprehensive out and about programme to schools and community centres across the city – we reached more than 37,000 people with 270 free events. It's clear that we are more than a venue. This sense of purpose and belief in our mission got us through that time.

Do you have any advice for other attractions who may be forced to temporarily close about how to continue to connect with audiences during that time?

Firstly, lead with hope. It's so important to have a resolute belief that you will reopen, despite all of the curveballs that will come your way.

Secondly, go where the audiences are. Our building's closure didn't stop us from being part of our city and our community. It gave us the opportunity to make some brilliant new connections so we had a great foundation to build from when we reopened.

The science centre invites people to get curious about the unknown



It also taught us to listen deeply to what's needed from us as an organisation, so we were able to flex what we did depending on the need – with free school takeover days, deep-diving research projects with schools focusing on what mattered to them, and family-focused activities at community centres and festivals. It also helped to be playful and fun, which our brand values lend themselves to beautifully – working with our partners, we ran a city-wide treasure hunt with 80 tickets hidden across Bristol, which was a brilliantly playful way to raise awareness of our reopening.

How would you sum up the mission of We The Curious?

As an educational charity and leading science centre, we exist to create positive social change.

Our mission is to connect and empower people by sharing creative experiences that celebrate the unknowns in science. What that means is creating places where people can come together to connect, and test things out – at whatever depth they want to. We're

committed to creating an inclusive environment where everyone can create and connect to new ideas, be heard and directly influence STEM.

We're learning from our partners, volunteers, funders and audiences as we go – which means that we're challenging systemic bias and doing things a little bit differently.

What have been the highest and lowest moments over the past two years for you?

The lowest moment was the day of the fire – seeing the plumes of black smoke and thinking it was all gone. It was such a relief when we found out it was 'just' the roof.

Highlights have been sprinkled throughout this whole process, but the stand-out one for me is the incredible work and passion that the teams have demonstrated throughout the past two years, delivering our mission across the city, working tirelessly to get us to reopening and doing all of that with energy and enthusiasm. Also, the people of Bristol who have been so unbelievably supportive throughout and have really helped us to keep going. ●

“I’m excited to return to my roots”

Franceen Gonzales, park president, Legoland Florida Resort

Merlin Entertainments’ Legoland Florida Resort has appointed Franceen Gonzales as its new park president, with responsibility for Legoland Florida Resort, Legoland Water Park, Peppa Pig Theme Park and Legoland Hotel.

Gonzales joins ahead of the opening of brand-new aquarium Sea Life Florida in Q3 this year, which she will also run. With 30 years of experience working for the attractions industry, she has served as park director at Six Flags Great Adventure and vice president of risk management at Great Wolf Resorts. Prior to joining Merlin, she was chief experience officer at waterpark manufacturer WhiteWater West.

Notable projects spearheaded by Gonzales at WhiteWater West include Royal Caribbean’s Perfect Day Island, featuring its inaugural cladded tower, AquaNick Resort in Riviera Maya, Mexico, with custom SpongeBob and PAW Patrol themes, and two major expansions of the highest-attended waterpark in Brazil,

“I’m excited to return to my roots in park operations and thrilled to continue the legacy of success at the world-class Legoland Florida Resort, alongside a dedicated team committed to delivering exceptional guest experiences,” said Gonzales.

“Stepping through the park, I rediscovered the sense of wonderment that both children and adults experience here. It’s truly special, and I feel deeply honoured to be joining this incredible team.”



Gonzales was appointed president in June 2024

Gonzales was appointed chair of ASTM International’s F24 committee for Amusement Rides and Devices in 2020 – the first female chair of the organisation, which writes the global technical safety standards for the industry. She’s also served on the Board of Directors for IAAPA (International Association of Amusement Parks and Attractions) twice, as well as on the board for the WWA (World Waterpark Association) and has held the position of chair of AIMS International (Amusement Industry Manufacturers and Suppliers).

In March 2024, Legoland Florida launched its Lego Ferrari Build and Race attraction, a new interactive experience which allows visitors to build and test Lego race cars.



The Lego Ferrari Build & Race Experience opened in March 2024



What are your plans for your first year at Legoland Florida Resort?

My focus will be to learn from the established team's success. It's crucial to build on the solid foundation laid out by past and present leaders, who possess a deep understanding of the resort's strengths.

Community involvement is extremely important to me and I'm committed to strengthening our relationships with those around us.

Much of that involvement sprouts from partnerships with our charitable partners including Merlin Magic Wand Foundation and Give Kids The World Village, who collaborate to bring a ADA accessible Legoland play space inside the resort for critically ill children and their families to enjoy a magical weeklong vacation at no cost. This is the kind of support I'm excited to expand.

We'll continue prioritising our employees by offering scholarships such as 'Building Higher' in partnership with Polk State College. This programme covers upfront tuition costs for our employees pursuing higher education, emphasising our commitment to educational advancement and community development.

What can visitors expect from Sea Life Florida when it opens?

Sea Life Florida is designed to be every child's inspirational guide to the ocean and to encourage them to be protectors of its creatures – we want to create a sense of amazing discovery by learning through engagement and interaction.

Guests will be immersed in exclusive theming that will be the first-of its kind for a Sea Life aquarium, discover marine life displays showcasing diversity and ecosystems and there will of course be educational materials and programmes to help teach children about marine life.

What are you most excited about in terms of Sea Life Florida?

What I'm going to enjoy most is watching children and their families be wowed as they're immersed in this underwater world and all of its magic.

Sea Life Florida will serve as an inspirational educational hub teaching visitors about Florida marine life and our conservation efforts.

I'm excited about revealing a new theming in one of our display areas – stay tuned for more on that in the coming months. ●

CHINA

Puy du Fou's SAGA City opens in Shanghai

French theme park operator Puy du Fou has partnered with Triotech to launch its first attraction in Asia.

The SAGA City of Light immersive show has opened in Shanghai, featuring stories inspired by Chinese history and legends.

Visitors embark on a two-hour journey through historical Shanghai in rides simulating a real-size train and other vehicles. Using a combination of Puy du Fou's immersive storytelling and Triotech's special effects, visitors are transported back to 1930s Shanghai exploring 26 possible routes across 40,000 square metres.

"If you want to conquer the world, you have to go

to China, it's such a huge market," said Puy du Fou CEO Nicolas de Villiers, speaking to *Attractions Management*.

"The first step is to prove that we can create shows that will touch the hearts of Chinese audiences. The next step will be to open a park, featuring several shows.

The attraction features seven dynamic platforms designed and built by Triotech.

"We're very proud to have contributed to this groundbreaking project," said Gabi Salabi, managing director of projects for Triotech. Working with Puy du Fou and its rich history has been a remarkable journey."

More: <http://lei.sr/K8eIU>



Visitors are transported to 1930s Shanghai

IMAGE © PUY DU FOU



IMAGE © PUY DU FOU

“

If you want to conquer the world, you have to go to China

Nicolas de Villiers,
CEO, Puy du Fou

GLOBAL

Therme Group works on model to reduce tourism industry emissions

Wellbeing company Therme Group has collaborated with researchers at Surrey University on a new carbon tokenomics model.

The two-year-long collaboration set out to explore how a transparent, traceable, efficient, fair, and effective carbon offset model for the visitor economy could be designed.

The visitor economy – the tourism sector relating to all activities generated by travel and leisure stays – has been

criticised for failing to deliver the CO₂-e reductions promised.

"Our goal is to provide the industry with a tool that enables precise carbon footprint measurement, and tourists with a reliable

way to offset CO₂," said Therme Group vice-president Professor Eduard Goëan.

The existing industry model requires companies to calculate their carbon emissions and pay

towards offsetting these. This model is considered inadequate as it is not standardised and leaves room for businesses to outsource their decarbonisation responsibility.

More: <http://lei.sr/o2W8c>



Tourism accounts for 11 per cent of greenhouse gas emissions

PHOTO: OLIVER SHUTTERSTOCK

EUROPE

Futuroscope opens Aquascope waterpark

French theme park Futuroscope has opened its new 6,000sq m waterpark, featuring unique immersive aquatic experiences.

The new 57m waterpark features three zones. The thrill zone has eight slides including a spiral slide that winds around the building. This zone also features a wave pool, and a bar and DJ area for night-time events.

The immersion zone has an aquatic cinema, an underwater viewing experience and a futuristic zone with on-water video mapping, water jets and special effects. The digital set design was created by

Canadian studio Moment Factory (see p28 for interview with Moment Factory CEO).

The third zone – the Aquafun zone for children aged three and over – has been designed around the theme of the mascot Kraki.

Visitors can float on a tube along the 350m-long lazy river that passes through the three zones. The park also features an outdoor swimming pool, beach area and dynamic river.

Aquascope has its own ticketing system and can accommodate 1,700 people. It uses innovations in hydraulic, thermal and energy engineering to reduce its carbon impact.

MOMENT FACTORY



Moment Factory teamed up with Futuroscope

"Innovation and creativity are at the heart of what we do," said Futuroscope CEO Rodolphe Bouin.

"We're creating a waterpark unlike anything that's been done before in Europe."

More: <http://lei.sr/1iu6t>



PHOTO: FUTUROSCOPE

UK

CBeebies Rainbow Adventure immersive experience launches

CBeebies Rainbow Adventure – an immersive experience for children – has opened at Westfield London, Shepherd's Bush, UK.

Designed specifically for children aged 0-6, CBeebies Rainbow Adventure has been created and produced by Rainbow Experience Limited, a company formed by ebp and Fiery Entertainment to present CBeebies Rainbow Adventure under license from BBC Studios.

CBeebies Rainbow Adventure brings together some well-loved CBeebies favourites, taking visitors on a journey featuring roleplay, live

storytelling, and music, with some surprises along the way.

During the 55-minute experience, visitors to CBeebies Rainbow Adventure explore immersive rooms from Hey Duggee, Bluey, JoJo & Gran Gran, and Mr Tumble and Friends as they work together to find the rainbow's lost colours.

Before they leave, visitors can pose for a free photo with one of their favourite costume characters from the adventure.

CBeebies Rainbow Adventure includes a complimentary cloakroom and buggy park alongside



CBeebies Rainbow Adventure

free admission for babes-in-arms. The experience has a team dedicated to inclusive access, supporting a range of requirements including audio-described performances, visual guides, free carer tickets, and wheelchair accessibility.

CBeebies Rainbow Adventure is written by

Olivier-nominated writer, Emma Earle, directed by Joe Hutton, and designed by production and costume designer, Polly Sullivan, produced by Olivier-nominated Emma Brünjes and the multi-Olivier award-winning producer Edward Snape.

More: <http://lei.sr/Y4P8W>

PHOTO: © CBEEBIES RAINBOW ADVENTURE

UK

Excurio creates new evolutionary VR experience

Virtual reality creator Excurio has teamed up with experts from the Muséum National d'Histoire Naturelle (France) to create Life Chronicles London, a free-roaming VR experience. Visitors to Eclips Centre in London's Westfield Stratford mall have access to the UK's first 1,000sq m free-roaming VR experience.

Led by a virtual guide, the 45-minute experience is the first of its kind to take visitors on a virtual journey of the major geological periods in the evolution of the earth and life itself.

Equipped with a VR headset, and accompanied by an immersive soundscape, visitors experience scenes spanning billions of years,

from the paleo-landscapes of the great geological periods to the first traces of life, including the great dinosaurs and the rise of humans.

Excurio worked closely with experts from the Muséum National d'Histoire Naturelle on this project. Paleontologists, paleobotanists, evolution specialists, and bio-acousticians from the museum all contributed to elements of script writing, 3D production and sound design.

The Life Chronicles VR experience was on show at the Muséum National d'Histoire Naturelle in Paris from October 2023 to June 2024.

More: <http://lei.sr/q1X2i>



PHOTO: FRANCO APELO

The experience explores the evolution of the earth

EUROPE

The Park Playground opens Porto VR franchise in Portugal



PHOTO: THE PARK PLAYGROUND

“

We're confident this will incentivise global audiences

Sérgio Basto, investor

The Park Playground has opened its first Immersive VR franchise in Porto, Portugal.

The Porto venue is the company's fifth European location and includes a bar and catering, alongside three free-roam fields offering the Park Playground's full library of original immersive VR experiences.

The new venue sees the Park Playground partner with franchise owners and investors Sérgio Basto, José Carlos Marques, and Miguel Soro.

"The Park's success across Europe demonstrates the quality and long-lasting appeal of its immersive VR experiences," said Sérgio Basto, the venue's lead investor. "We're confident



IMAGE: THE PARK PLAYGROUND

The Porto venue features three free-roam fields

this kind of cutting-edge entertainment will incentivise global audiences and the broader Portuguese community to travel to Porto."

Following the success of venues in the UK and central Europe, the standalone venue provides an opportunity for tourism in Porto, driving new visitors to the area

by diversifying the range of experiences on offer.

"This new expansion reinforces the emerging trend of communities seeking new forms of entertainment, with VR and technology poised to fill this gap," said Bill Painter, head of franchise at the Park Playground.

More: <http://lei.sr/o4c5r>

FAMILY ADVENTURE



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EMERALD PARK, IRELAND



US

Getty Museum refuses to surrender prized Greek bronze to Italy

The European Court of Human Rights has recognised Italy's claim to a prized Greek antiquity.

The statue of the Victorious Youth, also known as Atleta Di Fano and nicknamed the 'Getty Bronze', was acquired by the Getty Museum in California for US\$4m in 1977 and has been in dispute since 1989.

Found by Italian fishermen in 1964 off the coast of Fano, Italy, the statue is believed to have sunk with a ship carrying it to Italy after the Romans conquered Greece.

One of few remaining life-size Greek bronzes, the statue – dated between 300-100BC – stands approximately five feet (1.52m) tall.

The statue is the highest-profile object in Italy's ongoing heritage feud – a bid to win back thousands of artefacts it believes were stolen or looted.

An Italian court ordered the statue to be returned in 2010; Getty also appealed an Italian high court confiscation order in 2018, claiming its rights to the statue had been violated.

The Getty Museum has revealed it's considering an appeal, saying: "We believe that Getty's nearly 50-year public possession of an artwork that was neither created by an Italian artist nor found within Italian territory is appropriate, ethical and consistent with American and international law."

More: <http://lei.sr/u8N8r>



PHOTO: <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/2.0/deed.en>

The Victorious Youth is part of the Getty's collection

UK

Bridgerton's most Instagrammable locations revealed

Following the release of season three of Bridgerton, a study reveals its 10 most Instagrammable filming locations.

The study, conducted by QR code Generator, analysed Instagram data for each of the 20 filming locations in Bridgerton season three, with the total number of posts featuring location hashtags recorded.

Blenheim Palace came out on top, with 201,951 posts. The Oxfordshire palace will appear in Bridgerton for the first

time this season, after first appearing in Queen Charlotte as Buckingham House.

Bridgerton locations manager, Tony Hood, said: "Blenheim Palace gives the architectural gravitas we'd associate

with royalty. The history is baked into the location." Hampton Court Palace came in second with 181,786 posts. The Richmond-based location is described by Hood as: "Very square, very neat, very Regency".

Filming locations in London proved to be some of the most popular, with Chiswick House in West London at third place and The Old Royal Naval College in Greenwich ranking fourth. More: <http://lei.sr/Q3K5S>



PHOTO: NETFLIX

Much of Bridgerton is filmed in Bath, UK

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Fort Edmonton Park
Indigenous Peoples Experience
Edmonton, Canada

EUROPE

Europa-Park launches new Ghost Castle ride

German theme park Europa-Park has reopened its Geisterschloss (Ghost Castle) attraction following a complete redesign.

First opened in 1982, the attraction has been renamed Castello dei Medici and features new theming.

"Many of us, including myself, loved the Ghost Castle when we were young and we want future generations to be able to experience this joy too," said Ann-Kathrin Mack, partner at Europa-Park.

"The new theming ensures that the ride is exciting but not too scary, but it can still be a little test of courage."

The redesigned attraction takes visitors through the palace in small gondolas,

telling the story of the rise of Lorenzo – based on the historical figure of the early Italian Renaissance Lorenzo de' Medici.

During the four minute-long dark ride, visitors watch as Lorenzo finds an old stone tablet with strange symbols and text written in an unknown Latin language, promising eternal life to anyone who follows its instructions.

The ride shows Lorenzo's experiences – and whether he manages to escape death.

Mack Solutions is responsible for the storytelling, which features special effects, projections and illustrations.

More: <http://lei.sr/P3e7J>



The dark ride tells the story of Lorenzo

PHOTO: EUROPA-PARK



PHOTO: EUROPA-PARK

“

We want future generations to experience this joy
Ann-Kathrin Mack,
Partner, Europa-Park

UK

Merlin unveils record-breaking Hyperia coaster at Thorpe Park

Merlin Entertainment has launched its new Hyperia rollercoaster at Thorpe Park to celebrate its 45th year.

The ride is billed as the UK's tallest, fastest and most weightless rollercoaster, beating The Big One in Blackpool for height by 13ft and at 81 mph, besting Thorpe Park's Stealth coaster for speed.

Designed in-house by Merlin Magic Making – led by global creative director, Megan Wastell – and built by Mack Rides, Hyperia stands

236ft tall and has three inversions, including a dive loop and an 'Immelmann' – a climb followed by a half loop then a half roll in the opposite direction.

The storytelling evokes Hyperia, the daughter of an ancient river god whose fear of water traps her on an island.

To escape, she makes metal wings and launches herself from the highest mountain.

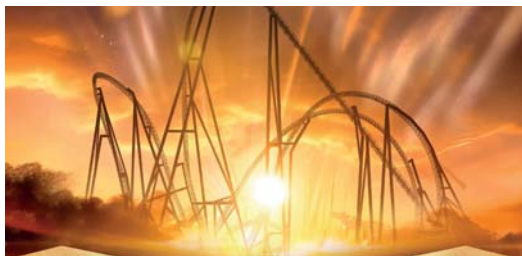
The new ride has wings as its logo in recognition.

"Hyperia combines epic storytelling and exhilarating thrills," said Wastell. "This ride showcases our commitment to creating unforgettable

memories through the magic of immersive storytelling and cutting-edge innovation, solidifying our place as the world leader in branded entertainment destinations."

Hyperia replaces two existing rides – Loggers Leap and the Rocky Express. ●

More: <http://lei.sr/x7W0w>



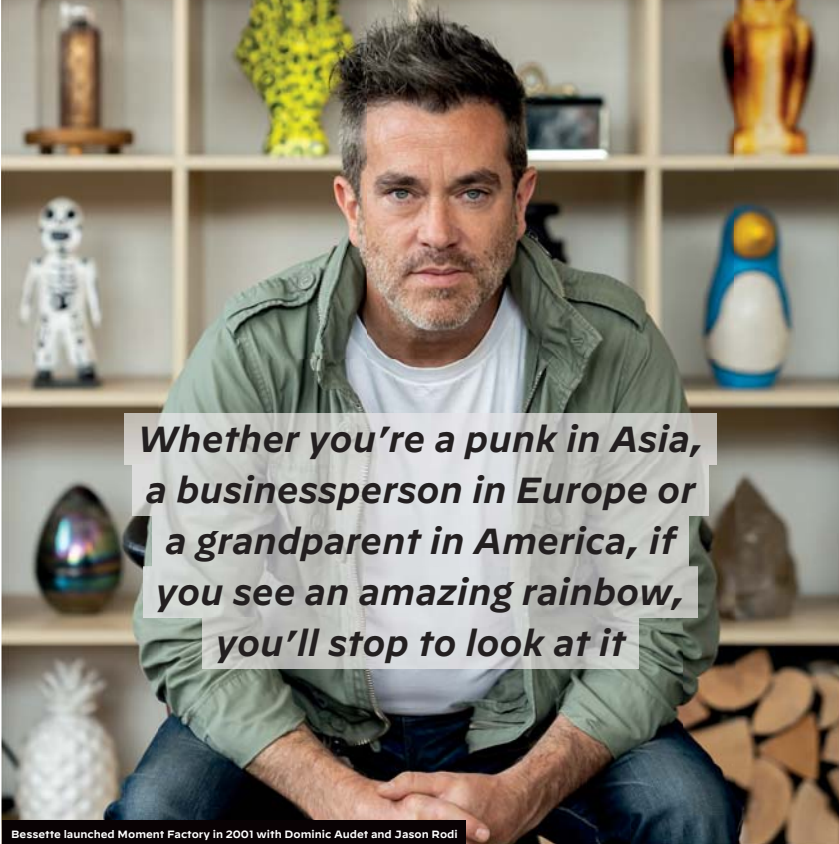
Hyperia was designed by Merlin and built by Mack Rides

PHOTO: MERLIN ENTERTAINMENTS



UNFORGETTABLE ENJOYMENT
- IN THEM PARKS.

Sakchin Bessette



*Whether you're a punk in Asia,
a businessperson in Europe or
a grandparent in America, if
you see an amazing rainbow,
you'll stop to look at it*

Bessette launched Moment Factory in 2001 with Dominic Audet and Jason Rodi



From projecting visuals at raves to illuminating the Sagrada Familia and working for Madonna, Canadian multimedia studio Moment Factory has had quite the journey. The co-founder tells Magali Robathan what's next

In the darkness of a Canadian forest, a mysterious smoke-filled doorway leads to a world where holographic fairies dance, the air shimmers with beautiful lights, and trees appear to come to life. As night falls over Barcelona, the Sagrada Familia's iconic façade is lit up with a spectacular moving fresco inspired by Gaudi's original drawings. Floating along a lazy river, guests enter a tunnel where mesmerising patterns are projected onto the walls, the water, and their own bodies.

These are all experiences created by Canadian immersive multimedia studio Moment Factory, launched in 2001 by Sakchin Bessette, Dominic Audet and Jason Rodi. The motto of the studio is 'we do it in public' and their aim is to bring people together in the physical world and inspire a sense of connection and amazement.

"We believe that connecting people is fundamental for humankind," says Sakchin Bessette, speaking to me from Montreal. "People are spending more time alone, in front of screens, becoming more isolated and

getting lonelier. Since COVID-19, people feel and understand the need to be with other people more than ever. They're hungry for new experiences that bring them together."

Today, Moment Factory employs more than 450 people across offices in Montreal, Paris, New York, Singapore and Tokyo. Clients include Disney, Las Vegas Sphere, Madonna, the Boston Museum of Science, NFL, Universal Studios, the Toronto Zoo and Paris' Dôme des Invalides.

Straddling sectors

Moment Factory's unique blend of storytelling and technology has been employed across a varied range of industries, with the team working in theme parks, waterparks, concerts, public spaces, heritage spaces, museums, outdoor environments, science centres, airports and more.

A look at just some of their projects over the past year illustrates the breadth of the company's work – highlights include a three-act immersive show that uses light, music and video mapping to highlight the beauty of Paris'



Futuroscope's new waterpark features a Moment Factory-designed experience

historic Dôme des Invalides; the launch of outdoor immersive art experience Mirror Mirror in Calgary, Canada; a unique experiential space created for French theme park Futuroscope's new Aquascope waterpark; and the creation of a range of visual content for the Sphere in Las Vegas.

Another key project, The Messi Experience, was launched in April 2024 in Miami US, with the aspiration to visit over 150 cities in the next five years. Produced, created and designed by Moment Factory and Primo Entertainment, this multi-room experience explores the life of footballer Lionel Messi using a mix of digital and physical activities. Visitors are given the chance to board an open top bus to experience the Argentinian winning parade, visit Camp Nou, take part in football challenges and visit Messi's childhood home.

Creating magic

"Whatever we're doing, we strive to create magic for our audiences," says Bessette.

"Humans are programmed to react in certain ways to nature. If you see the sunset on the ocean or the beauty of a flower or the night sky, you feel part of something bigger.

"It's cross cultural. Whether you're a punk in Asia, a businessperson in Europe or a grandparent in America, if you see an amazing rainbow, you'll stop to look at it. You'll think, there's magic here and your body will feel it. It's these visceral feelings of being part of something larger than yourself that we're trying to create."

Aquascope

● Futuroscope, France

Launched in July 2024 as part of Futuroscope's new 6,000sq m indoor waterpark Aquascope, Les Abysses de Lumière is a multimedia experience created by Moment Factory.

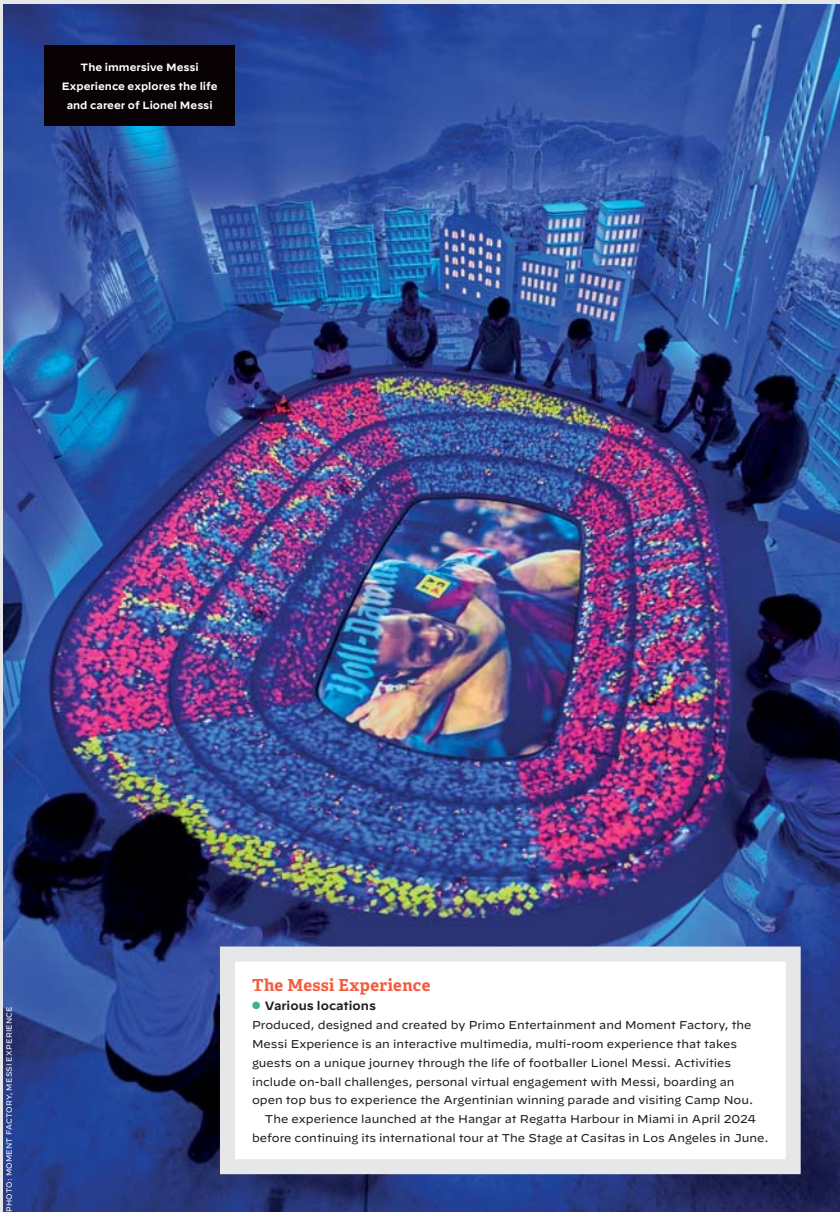
One of Aquascope's three experiential spaces, Les Abysses de Lumière sees visitors float through a "spellbindingly immersive universe combining synchronised programming of video mapping, spatialised audio, lighting, interactivity and choreographed water effects."

The immersive experience features various zones, including a mysterious cove inhabited by fantastic and uncanny wildlife and plant life; interactive beaches brimming with bioluminescent particles; and an Aquaciné where visitors can learn more about Kraki, a creature from another world.

Emotion is key, when it comes to transporting audiences, says Bessette. "You can easily impress people with big, new technology, but connecting them to a narrative flow and emotional curve is really fundamental to having depth in the experience," he says.

"It's all very thought out. We have emotional curves that we structure into our projects as we're designing them. Music in particular is a big driver of emotion."

The immersive Messi Experience explores the life and career of Lionel Messi



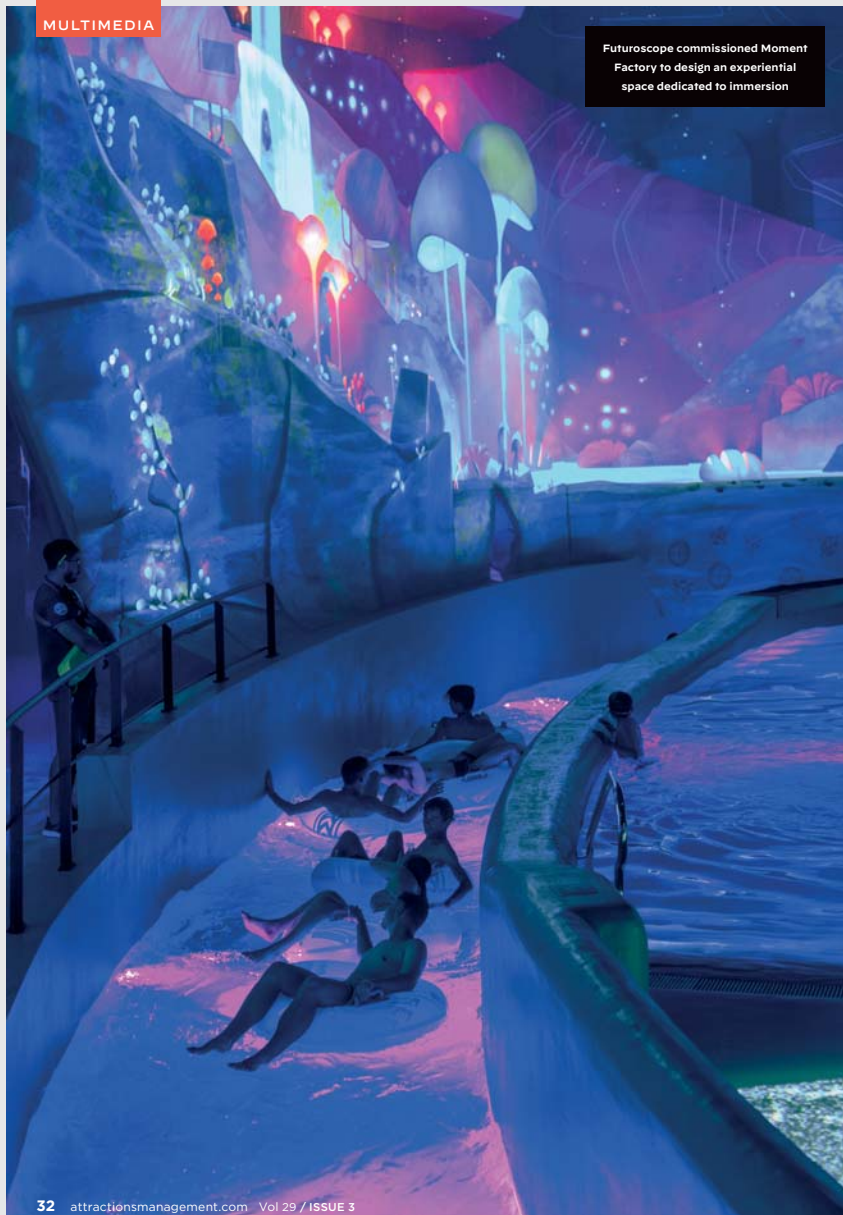
The Messi Experience

● Various locations

Produced, designed and created by Primo Entertainment and Moment Factory, the Messi Experience is an interactive multimedia, multi-room experience that takes guests on a unique journey through the life of footballer Lionel Messi. Activities include on-ball challenges, personal virtual engagement with Messi, boarding an open top bus to experience the Argentinian winning parade and visiting Camp Nou.

The experience launched at the Hangar at Regatta Harbour in Miami in April 2024 before continuing its international tour at The Stage at Casitas in Los Angeles in June.

Futuroscope commissioned Moment Factory to design an experiential space dedicated to immersion





Les Abysses de Lumière
uses video-mapping and
immersive lighting



The Aquascope project is
Moment Factory's largest in
an aquatic setting



PHOTO: MOMENT FACTORY / MIRROR MIRROR

Mirror Mirror

● Various locations worldwide

Mirror Mirror combines scenography, lighting design, words, original music and interactivity to create a multimedia experience that invites visitors to explore their imaginations.

Across multiple immersive art installations, visitors are invited to create their own unique engagement with the experience. Everyone begins the journey by selecting one of three doors and from there, visitors explore at their own pace, in their own way.

The experience launched in Montreal, Canada in April 2023, before touring to Adelaide, Australia, and then Calgary, Canada.

The start of it all

The Moment Factory story started in the late 1990s, when Bessette was part of a group of friends creating slide projections and 16mm projections for clubs and raves across Montreal. As digital technology developed, so did the scope of what they could achieve.

"Everything changed," says Bessette. "All of a sudden you could shoot on a Mini DV camcorder, edit your footage on a computer and then project it that same evening in a nightclub or at a party. It was super exciting – we really felt like we were part of something new."

In 2001, Bessette launched Moment Factory with friends Jason Rodi and Dominic Audet.

"Jason was a film student, and Dominic came from a corporate background," Bessette says.

"Dominic introduced us to that world and we started doing corporate events, as well as special shows and parties."

In the early days, funding was a major challenge for the studio. "In the beginning, we weren't making much money at all. Each project financed the next. It was a struggle for many years," says Bessette.



AURA Invalides combines
orchestral music, video
mapping and lighting effects

A breakthrough moment came when they began working for Cirque du Soleil, creating parties and auxiliary events on cruise ships and in bars, introducing the work of Moment Factory to audiences around the world.

In 2012, Moment Factory came to global attention with its spectacular Superbowl half time show featuring Madonna, which was watched by an estimated 114 million viewers. In the same year, the studio was asked by the cities of Barcelona and Montreal to create a sound and light experience to showcase the complex façade of the Sagrada Família in Barcelona. The resulting 15 minute multimedia show was a huge success.



PHOTO: MOMENT FACTORY / AURA INVALIDES

AURA Invalides

● Dôme des Invalides, Paris, France

As night falls, the Dôme des Invalides comes to life, with light, orchestral music, and video mapping revealing its beauty and rich heritage with AURA Invalides, an original creation by Moment Factory, produced by Cultural in partnership with the Musée de l'Armée - Hôtel National des Invalides.

Launched in September 2023, this 50 minute-long experience sees visitors guided by light as they wander through the Dôme and its six chapels. Showcasing the iconic monument's architecture and heritage through light, video mapping and music, the experience allows visitors to see Dôme des Invalides in a new light, while generating revenue to help with the maintenance of the building.

Splashing out

The attractions industry is seeing a slow but steady increase in projects that mix the worlds of waterparks and immersive multimedia entertainment and this is an area that Bessette is fascinated by.

December 2023 saw the launch of an intriguing multimedia experience as part of the expansion of the Wild Water Dome indoor waterpark in Tennessee, US. Moment Factory collaborated with Wilderness at the Smokies to create the unique attraction, which sees guests float along a lazy river, taking in dynamic lighting, spatialised sound, and video projections, inspired by the beauty of the Great Smoky Mountains.

This was followed by a project that saw Moment Factory team up with French theme park Futuroscope to create a digital aqua experience as part of the new waterpark. Opened in July 2024, Les Abysses de Lumière combines video mapping, spatialised audio, lighting and choreographed water effects to offer bathers an unusual and hypnotic experience.

"This is a very important milestone in the waterpark world," says Bessette. "We're helping to reinvent them. It's really interesting to bring immersive multimedia entertainment to the waterpark world – it's a great mix.

"Since the start of Moment Factory, we've been mixing up different contexts

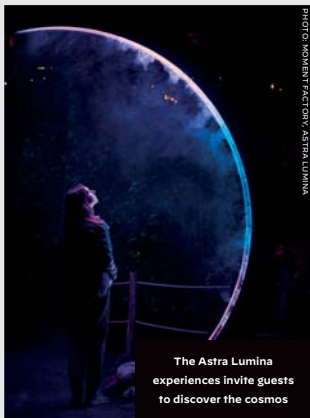


PHOTO: MOMENT FACTORY / ASTRA LUMINA

The Astra Lumina experiences invite guests to discover the cosmos

and mediums – bringing scenography and multimedia techniques and experiences into different spaces, from airports and concert halls to forests and heritage buildings.”

Original productions

Looking ahead, the focus is on developing the studio's own productions.

“There are two parts to Moment Factory,” says Bessette. “There's the service division, and that's where people call us and ask us to participate in a project, or to design a complete project for them. The other division focuses on the development of our own experiences.”

Moment Factory's original productions include the Lumina Night Walks series, the AURA heritage series, augmented games, Mirror Mirror and other immersives experiences such as The Messi Experience.

The much-loved Lumina Night Walk series was created almost by accident, says Bessette, when Moment Factory was asked by a national park in Quebec to create some digital mapping for a hanging bridge on the site.

“The team working on it came to me with the idea of creating something far more ambitious – a night walk bringing together nature and technology,” he explains.

“They could see the vision, and they were keen to try something different.”

It was an experiment, says Bessette, and the studio had no idea how people would

PHOTO: MOMENT FACTORY / ONIWA LUMINA



respond to this new creation – a series of storytelling vignettes set along a pathway through the woods that used special effects, music, lighting and video to magical effect.

It was an instant success. Foresta Lumina opened in 2014 in Parc de la Gorge de Coaticook, and sold more than 70,000 tickets in the first few months – almost 10 times more than the initial estimated foot traffic.

Since then, a further 20 Lumina attractions have opened all over the world – in Canada, the US, France, Japan, Singapore, China, Australia and New Zealand – and the latest is due to open



Each Lumina night walk is unique, bringing to life local stories and highlighting the natural beauty of its surroundings

Onhwa' Lumina celebrates the culture of the Indigenous Huron-Wendat Nation

at Wilderness Resort in Wisconsin Dells in the US this autumn, telling the story of a fictional deer growing up in nature. Each Lumina night walk is unique, bringing to life local stories and highlighting the natural beauty of its surroundings.

One of the latest Moment Factory productions is *Mirror Mirror*, an indoor 'playground of immersive art' that can be scaled and adapted for a wide range of venues, including shopping centres, entertainment venues and FECs. The experience launched in Montreal in April 2023, before touring to Adelaide, Australia and then to Calgary, Canada.

Another Moment Factory original production, *AURA*, sees heritage sites highlighted with projection mapping, light and music. This series has been staged at Montreal's Notre-Dame Basilica since 2017 and the Dôme des Invalides in Paris since 2023, with further projects coming soon.

"Our five-year plan is to develop and scale our own productions," explains Bessette. "Having worked on so many amazing projects, we've developed our own IP. Now we want to scale this IP with promoters and partners around the world. "We're excited for the future." ●

ROLL *of* HONOUR

The Museum + Heritage Awards celebrates the best museums, exhibitions, partnerships and teams. We check out the 2024 winners

Dubbed the Oscars of the museum world, the Museum + Heritage Awards recognise excellence across the industry.

This year's ceremony took place at Hilton Park Lane in London, where 18 awards were presented to museums of all sizes from all over the world ranging from Museum of Transport and Technology (MOTAT) in New Zealand to the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam.

Introduced for the first time, the Museums and Heritage Sector Impact Award aims to highlight the people and organisations driving positive change, and was awarded this year

to museum consultant Sam Bowen for her work on the SEND in Museums campaign.

Anna Preedy, director of Museums + Heritage Awards said: "As we celebrate excellence in museums and heritage, I want to reflect on the profound importance of your work to society. Museums and cultural institutions serve as custodians of our collective memory, guardians of our heritage, and catalysts for dialogue, understanding, and empathy.

"In a world often divided, you offer spaces of unity, inspiration, and hope – reminding us of our shared humanity and the power of culture to transcend barriers."



The National Trust asked RCMG to explore the themes of loneliness and isolation



Last year RCMG launched guidance for museums on advancing trans inclusion



The RCMG team at the Permissible Beauty exhibition launch

JUDGES' SPECIAL RECOGNITION AWARD

Research Centre for Museums and Galleries
University of Leicester, UK

As part of the School of Museum Studies at the University of Leicester, the Research Centre for Museums and Galleries (RCMG) carries out research that stimulates new thinking and creative practice enabling cultural organisations to become more ambitious and impactful in nurturing more equitable and inclusive societies.

The judges said: "Celebrating a team whose ethical heart and bravery are matched only by its kindness and steadfastness, RCMG is unstinting in supporting our sector to be more bold, more ambitious, and more impactful in its socially engaged thinking and practice."



Mat Fraser was commissioned by RCMG to explore how disability is portrayed in museums



The Mary Rose Museum was praised for its innovative use of technology in Dive 4D



BEST USE OF DIGITAL - UK

The Mary Rose Trust - Dive 4D

The Mary Rose Museum, Portsmouth, UK

Launched in April 2023, this 4D immersive cinema experience tells the story of the finding, excavation and recovery of the *Mary Rose*.

Visitors hear the stories of the people who dived on the ship, before entering the 4D theatre and joining the divers as they discover the first timbers, excavate the 34m-long shipwreck, recover her treasures and return the *Mary Rose* to the surface for the first time in 437 years.

The experience is brought to life with a combination of archive footage and CGI, as well as multi-sensory features including sounds, smells, bubbles, wind and movement.

The judges said: "The impact this digital installation has had on its organisation should not be underestimated, demonstrating how technology can be transformative when opportunities are maximised"

Digital technology was used to bring stories of flight in New Zealand to life



BEST USE OF DIGITAL - INTERNATIONAL

Te Kōtiū immersive projection experience

Museum of Transport and Technology (MOTAT), Auckland, New Zealand

This immersive digital experience celebrates the stories of flight in New Zealand, from the migration of native Kuaka, to celebrating the growing diversity within the aviation and space industries.

Visitors see history come to life with bold balloonists, the glorious gliding of pioneer aviator George Bolt, and the extraordinary feats and records of leading Aotearoa (New Zealand) aviators such as Jean Batten. Stories are brought to life with a mix of video, animation, oral story-telling and soundscape.

The judges said: Bringing objects and stories to life, with beautiful simplicity being its strength, this great use of digital technology is both impactful and effective.

PERMANENT EXHIBITION OF THE YEAR South Asia Gallery: a British Museum partnership

Manchester Museum, Manchester, UK

The first permanent gallery in the UK to celebrate the experiences and contribution of the South

Asian diaspora, this exhibition displays material from the British Museum alongside the best of South Asian collections in Manchester. Co-curated with the South Asia Gallery Collective – a group of 30 people from varying disciplines – this story-led, multilingual gallery was launched in February 2023.

The judges said: "This winning exhibition is viewed as a watershed moment for the sector. There is perhaps no better way to sum up its impact than by quoting one of its visitors: "The honesty of the impact of colonialism in our communities is one



The South Asia Gallery
in Manchester Museum
was praised by judges

of the reasons I will be bringing not only my South Asian friends, family and my parents to the museum, but also my non-South Asian loved ones too; the gallery shares a part of me that I may not have been able to express in words to them before. Places we have felt excluded from our whole lives and shield our parents away from, I now walk into proudly."

INTERNATIONAL EXHIBITION OF THE YEAR – THE WINNER Mission Masterpiece at the Rijksmuseum

Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, Netherlands

The Rijksmuseum's first exhibition aimed specifically at children invited visitors to investigate real works of art in the museum using microscopes and x-ray machines.

A partner project between the Rijksmuseum and NEMO Science Museum, Mission Masterpiece saw the entire Philips Wing transformed into a huge research lab, where families could use microscopes and x-ray machines to search for genuine masterpieces.

The judges praised the Mission Masterpiece exhibition, saying: "Featuring the perfect balance of old and new tech, this brilliantly executed family exhibition was built on detailed research, bringing the behind-the-scenes of the museum to life for families and children."



Children were invited to
become science investigators
at the Rijksmuseum



The contributors to *Speak*, a film commissioned by the Migration Museum

TEMPORARY OR TOURING EXHIBITION OF THE YEAR – BUDGET OVER £80K

Heart of the Nation: Migration and the Making of the NHS,

Migration Museum: Various locations around the UK

Created to mark the 75th anniversary of the NHS, this touring exhibition from London's Migration Museum shines a light on the stories and experiences of people who moved to Britain to work in the NHS through photography, film, oral histories and an immersive experience that brings together singing and storytelling.

The exhibition launched at Leicester Museum & Art Gallery, before moving to Trinity Leeds and then to Lewisham Shopping Centre. It ran until July 2024.

The judges said: "With an impressively wide reach, this exhibition tells an important story from a new angle in a way that is warm, impactful, universal and all on a relatively low budget."

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PROGRAMME OF THE YEAR

Multaka-Oxford

History of Science Museum & Pitt
Rivers Museum, Oxford, UK

The award-winning Multaka-Oxford team was formed in 2018 with the aim of bringing communities together by sharing the rich knowledge and heritage of people from all over the world who have made their home in Oxfordshire.

Multaka-Oxford uses museums and their collections as a 'meeting point' for bringing people together. Funded by a donation from Alwaleed Philanthropies, the group is based at Oxford University's History of Science Museum and Pitt Rivers Museum.

The judges said: "Deep, broad, impactful, authentic and genuine were a few of the words used to describe this winning programme by an organisation at the top of its game, in undertaking strategically impressive work."



Judges described the MultakaOxford project as "Impactful and genuine"

Leeds City Museum
worked with the
community to create
this hip hop exhibition

**TEMPORARY OR TOURING
EXHIBITION OF THE YEAR
– BUDGET UNDER £80K**

**A Hip Hop Journey:
50 Years of Kulture**

Leeds City Museum, UK

Co-curated with Leeds Museums and Galleries and the volunteer-run Hip Hop Historian Society, this exhibition showcased the history of hip hop and its impact in Leeds.

Working with inspirational local artists, renowned record shops, and communities from Leeds and Yorkshire, the exhibition brought together stories and objects which celebrate the creativity of hip hop and its values of justice, peace, respect, self-worth and community.

The judges said: "This winning exhibition shows co-curation at its very best; a genuine community response, it is authentic and creative, achieving impressive scale on a tiny budget." ●

THE OTHER WINNERS

● **Innovator of the Year**
PinPoint Visualisation Limited
Voyager Art

● **Volunteer(s) of the Year**
Suffolk Archives/Suffolk
County Council
Kamal Faizi – Suffolk Archives
and Volunteering Matters

● **Team of the Year** sponsored
by Scutum Group Ltd
The Powell – Cotton Museum
Skulls on the move!

● **Cafe or Restaurant of the Year**
The Bowes Museum
Café Bowes

● **Learning Programme of the Year**
Horniman Museum and Gardens
Secondary School Programme

● **Visitor Welcome Award**
sponsored by Tyg Ltd
Beamish, The Living
Museum of the North
Beamish, The Living
Museum of the North

● **Judges' Special Recognition Award**
Research Centre for Museums and
Galleries, University of Leicester

● **Marketing + Communications**
Campaign of the Year
sponsored by Cabbells Ltd
The Tank Museum
YouTube & The Creator Economy

● **Partnership of the Year**
Portsmouth Historic Dockyard
A partnership between the Mary
Rose Trust and the National
Museum of the Royal Navy

● **Restoration or Conservation**
Project of the Year
The Churches Conservation Trust
Bees, Bodies, Bodley – The
(Re)Birth of Sudbury Arts Centre

● **Shop of the Year**
Shakespeare's Globe
The Globe Shop

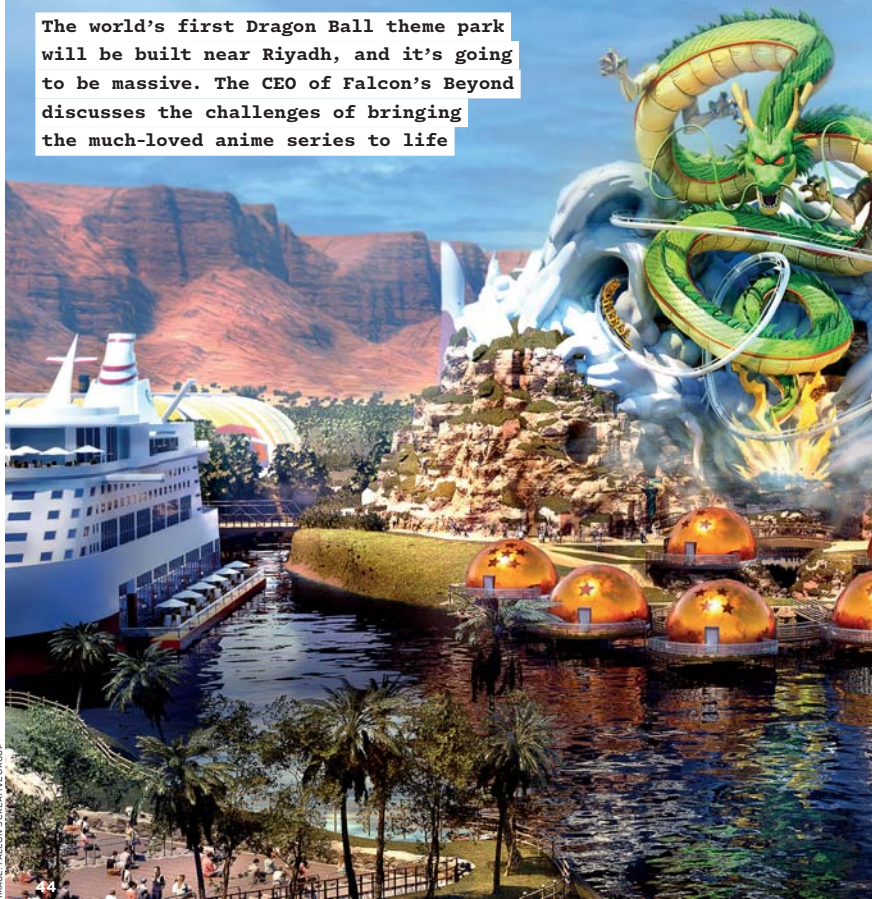
● **Sustainable Project of the Year**,
which was sponsored by the
National Lottery Heritage Fund
Joint winners:
Manchester Museum and
Museum Development North West

● **Roots and Branches**
The Scottish Crannog Centre
1000 Fingerprints 1000 Voices

www.museumsandheritage.com

CECIL MAGPURI

The world's first Dragon Ball theme park will be built near Riyadh, and it's going to be massive. The CEO of Falcon's Beyond discusses the challenges of bringing the much-loved anime series to life





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***Our design team
is led by true
fans who know
every nuance
of Dragon Ball***

In March 2024, Saudi Arabia's Qiddiya Investment Company (QIC) announced that it plans to build a theme park based on the Japanese animated series Dragon Ball as part of the Qiddiya City project.

Covering more than 500,000sq metres within Qiddiya City near Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, the park will feature seven themed lands recreating iconic locations from the original series, including Kame House, Capsule Corporation and Beerus's Planet.

Dragon Ball theme park will feature more than 30 attractions, including five state-of-the-art rides. A 70m-high figure of the dragon Shenron from the series will house the park's signature rollercoaster ride and themed restaurants and hotels will continue the story.

Falcon's Creative Group has been chosen as the masterplanner, attraction designer and creative guardian of the Dragon Ball theme park. Here Falcon's Beyond CEO Cecil Magpuri lets us into the plans for this major new attraction.

What is special about the Dragon Ball theme park project for you? What are you most excited about?

The Dragon Ball franchise helped introduce the world to manga and anime, and its influence can be seen in the global impact it's had on pop culture. The fanbase is incredibly passionate and excited about this project and we are too. In fact, our design team is led by true fans who know every nuance of Dragon Ball. ▶

The 500,000sq m park
will feature seven Dragon
Ball-themed lands

When you have fans creating for fans, you can dive deeper into the lore and not only deliver what fans think they want, but surprise and delight them with things they may not even know they wanted or needed. What I'm most excited about with the Dragon Ball theme park is to push all the boundaries of theme park design. Not even the world's biggest theme parks have given fans the level of immersion we'll deliver.

How do you approach a project like this? What is your starting point?

The starting point is the source material. Luckily, we're already true fans who love the franchise – many of our creative team since their childhood or teen years. Pulling from the hundreds of episodes of Dragon Ball and the thousands of pages of manga was a breeze. From there, the exciting part became working with the actual IP holders who made the TV series. Working with Toei Animation has given us unprecedented insight into the brand.

What are the biggest challenges of bringing such a well-loved series to life? Is the sense of responsibility to Dragon Ball fans daunting?

Working with this iconic IP and the decades of storytelling it embraces is amazing – it's daunting and exciting at the same time. Dragon Ball has very passionate fans and so we have to deliver.

Falcom's has a long history of working with some of the largest IP holders in the world, so this is familiar territory for us. Respecting this brand is of utmost importance to us – as is respecting the passion that comes from these fans. The fan base is incredible.

Can you reveal any highlights that fans can expect from the theme park?

Dragon Ball theme park is going to be fully immersive. When guests walk through the gate, they'll become a part of the Dragon Ball universe. For true fans, it's going to be a mind-blowing adventure. Park guests will be able to create epic sagas of their own with Goku and pals as they experience the breadth of the entire series – from the original Dragon Ball to Dragon Ball Super.



What will make this project unique?

This project is going to push the boundaries of the theme park industry. It's very rare to have a whole theme park dedicated to one single IP.

Dragon Ball Theme Park will be solely devoted to the world of Dragon Ball and its legendary epochs – Dragon Ball, Dragon Ball Z, and Dragon Ball Super. We get to follow the main character Goku's journey through life – Dragon Ball begins the series with him as a little kid, but by the time the Super series takes place, he's a grandparent.

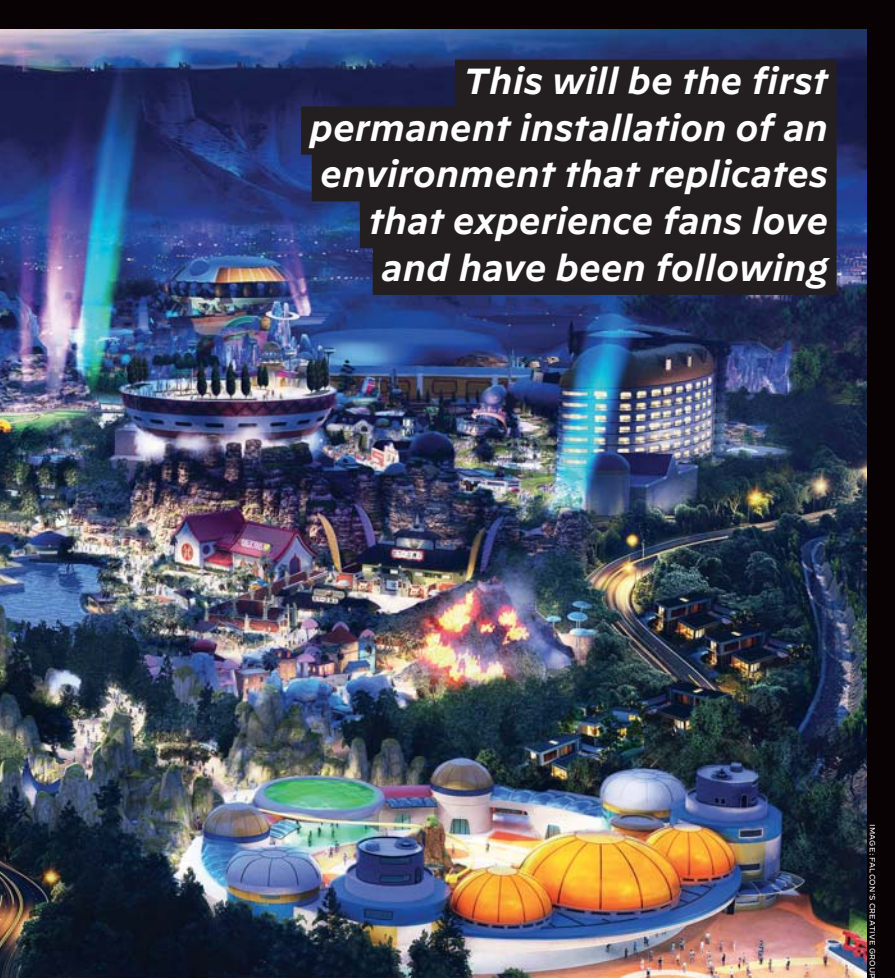
It's so rich with storytelling. It has realms and environments that allow us to go deeper into the lore of Dragon Ball.

It's really exciting to be able to execute that in this canvas. Part of pushing the boundaries of theme park design is the recognition that our park will cover all of these beloved epochs in ways visitors can enjoy them all.

You've said that you aim to deliver not just what fans think they want, but also things they may not even know they want. How do you plan to do this?

One of the things that I think we're most excited about is the manifestation of Dragon Ball in real life.

Fans are hungry for that – we can see that in the success of Dragon Ball pop ups. This will be the first permanent installation of an environment that replicates that experience fans love and have been following for years.



This will be the first permanent installation of an environment that replicates that experience fans love and have been following

FALCON'S CREATIVE GROUP

Founded in 2000 by Cecil Magpuri, themed entertainment company Falcon's designs, creates, and operates high profile guest experiences for global audiences. The company works across theme parks, museums, zoos, aquariums, location-based entertainment venues, themed restaurants and shops and resorts.

Clients include the National Geographic Museum, Motiongate Dubai, Kennedy Space Center and Lotte World. As well as the Dragon Ball theme park, Falcon's is also the master planner and creative guardian of Qiddiya's Aquarabia, the Middle East's largest water theme park, and is involved with design and technology development for Qiddiya's Gaming and Esports district.

The Dragon Ball theme park will feature more than 30 themed rides

► We're doing so many innovative things in terms of technology to immerse guests in the story that it won't even matter if they know the Dragon Ball lore. They're going to be immersed in such amazing technology and storytelling that they're just going to fall in love with the story, and will probably go back and start to watch all the Dragon Ball episodes. Fans will leave the Dragon Ball theme park feeling like they've truly been in the world of Dragon Ball.

Will the recent death of Dragon Ball creator Akira Toriyama affect the project?

We were saddened by Toriyama's passing. He helped introduce manga and anime to legions of people around the globe, and his influence can be seen in the impact that Dragon Ball has had on global audiences. Toriyama is a revered figure, and as the theme park's designers, we're honoured to protect his rich legacy and offer generations of fans the opportunity to enjoy his amazing creation firsthand in an entirely new and exciting way.

How closely are you working with Qiddiya and Toei Animation on this project? Who takes the lead in terms of the creative vision? How does the partnership work?

We're working closely with Qiddiya and Toei Animation on every aspect of the park. We share the same creative vision for this park, and have been given the opportunity to think boldly. These things will help us create something the world has never seen before.

What trends do you see in the attractions industry that are affecting your work?

Post-pandemic, we've seen tremendous growth in the experience economy. People want to get out of the house and have new adventures, so our work in location-based entertainment is booming. Companies are making significant investments in live experiences that pay off with unforgettable moments.

What do you love most about your job?

I knew at seven years old that I was an artist and that this would be my life's work. Being able to create every day makes me happy. I love being surrounded by other artists and creatives at the top of their game and collaborating with them to take IPs to the next level and bring them to life through storytelling that connects with audiences via digital and physical experiences. ●

Akira Toriyama is a revered figure – as the theme park's designers, we're honoured to help protect his legacy



RISE UP

A major new museum and cultural centre opening in Lagos this autumn aims to celebrate and uplift Yoruba culture. Magali Robathan speaks to the architect behind the project

When Studio Imagine Simply Architecture (Si.Sa) was given the task of designing the John K Randle Center in

Lagos, Nigeria, and helping to create a museum space to celebrate the vibrancy and diversity of Yoruba culture and history, founder Seun Oduwole knew that a 'traditional' Western-style museum wasn't going to work.

"You go into most museums, they're very static; very contemplative," he says, speaking to CNN. "If you're thinking about a museum that's focused on Yoruba culture, there's a conflict... we're not quiet, we're not static."

The central question when designing the John K Randle Center for Yoruba Culture and History, says Oduwole, was: "How do we celebrate it in a way that's uniquely Yoruba so that anyone who comes into this space is very clear where they are?"

The answer is a joyful, colourful 1,800sq m museum space that references Yoruba culture with its form, colours and materials. Storytelling and music is important here, as is an atmosphere that makes everyone feel welcome.

"It's unapologetic," says Oduwole. "It celebrates the best aspects of the [Yoruba] culture, of the language, the history, the heroes, the mythologies and the narratives." ▶

The building appears to rise from the earth; a green roof ties it back to the landscape

The centre is playing a key role in bringing Yoruba artefacts back from European museums

It's important to tell the story that glorifies the lion and not the hunter





PHOTO: ADEMOLA OLANIBAN & JIDE ATAYO/ATELE

PHOTO: ADEMOLA OLANIBAN & JIDE ATAYO/ATELE

The metal screen facade celebrates Yoruba weaving, textiles and craftsmanship

From the inside

It was important for the story of Yoruba art, culture and history to be told through the lens of the Yoruba people, rather than from an outsider's perspective looking in, explains Oduwole.

"These sorts of institutions are important at scale around the continent [of Africa], because it's important to tell the story that glorifies the lion and not the hunter," he says.

"It's important so that all these different stories – the nuances, the complexities – can be told in full voice, in full colour, in their own language, expressing their own identity."

The museum explores Yoruba culture and history via artefacts, old and new media and various storytelling devices. Visitors entering the museum are greeted by an AV display of the Yoruba creation myth, as well as African artworks and fashion. Dedicated spaces explore history, art, mythology, fashion, entertainment, music, culture and more, with artefacts ranging from historical objects and carvings to Nigerian garments and colonial-era gramophones. There is a dedicated space for oral storytelling and Nigerian artists – including author Wole Soyinka and musician Fela Kuti – are celebrated.

The John K Randle Center is in talks with European museums including the British Museum and the Pitts River Museum in London to bring Yoruban artefacts back to Nigeria.

The bigger picture

The museum is part of a wider regeneration project – also designed by Si.Sa – to revive the historic John K Randle Center, an important cultural and recreational facility that included a public swimming pool built in 1928 by Sierra Leonean medical doctor John Randle for Lagosians to learn to swim in.



PHOTO: ADEMOLA OLANIBAN & JIDE ATAYO/ATELE

The museum features important artefacts

The centre – which also had a park and memorial – had fallen into disrepair, and the pool was no longer in use.

The new cultural centre features a restored swimming pool, revitalised public park, library, restaurants, bars, public square and a performance hall, as well as the museum. The new buildings were inspired by Yoruba architecture and craftsmanship, with the walls finished in earth-hues to echo the mud aesthetic of traditional Yoruba homes, while a metallic gold latticed screen references Yoruba craftsmanship. The building appears to rise from the earth and lean forward as a symbol of Yoruban progressiveness, while the sloping green roof "ties the building to the landscape."

"It's a surreal feeling when people are grateful to you for giving them a space that represents them," says Oduwole. "I hope people take away the idea that nothing is impossible."



Ralph Appelbaum Associates
worked with the curatorial
team to design the exhibition



The architects have restored
the original 1928 public pool
built by Dr John Randle

Visitors are greeted by an immersive environment – a visually stimulating spectacle

Here Oduwale talks to *Attractions Management* about his experience of designing the project

How have you designed the building to be as welcoming and uplifting as possible?

From an urbanism perspective, there were several drivers: to restore as much of the old fabric and memory of the city as possible by rebuilding the swimming pool, replacing the demolished cultural hall and replanting landscape lost to development.

Architecturally, we sought to create a building grounded in context and conscious of its surroundings. Internally we sought to interrogate museology as a construct in order to create a museum and visitor experience that was relatable and immersive.

What has been the biggest challenge of this project?

Securing the appropriate level of funding to complete the project excellently and on time.

How was the design inspired by its location and by the surrounding community?

We applied historical patterns and visual metaphors as concept drivers. The site layout was informed by the concentric settlement patterns found in Yoruba urbanism, which typically had the Royal palace at the centre fronted by a square.

The curved part of the site allowed us to shape the museum building as a fractal. The building rises from in earth in a nod to

Yoruba spirituality and the metal screen around the façade pays homage to age old skills such as metalwork, woodcarving, looming and weaving.

Internally, the museum is devoted to the elucidation of Yoruba culture, its representation as visual and verbal Oriki (praise poetry), presentation of its philosophical thought system using concepts of Ori (spiritual head), Ase (life force) and Iwa (essential nature). It's a space where mythology, archaeology, history and storytelling meet to set the stage for the understanding of Yoruba culture and history.

Can you pick out two or three particularly interesting areas of the museum?

Visitors are greeted by a completely immersive environment, a visually stimulating spectacle with spatial audio consisting of music and storytelling throughout the journey, which add context to a mix of storytelling media ranging from antiquities, interactives and objects of cultural significance.

Do you have a personal favourite part of the museum?

The future storytelling area where animators, contemporary artists and storytellers have an opportunity to reimagine their own version of a future from the Yoruba thought perspective. ●



Seun Oduwale

PHOTO: ADEMOJA OLANIRAN & JIDE ATOBATELE

Project Details

Name: John Randle Center for Yoruba Culture and History

Location: Lagos, Nigeria

Area: 18,000sq m

Centre inaugurated: January 2024

Museum open to the public: Q3 2024

Client: Lagos State Government

Architect: Seun Oduwale - Studio Imagine Simply Architecture

Exhibition designer: Ralph Applebaum Associates



The story of the Yoruba people is told via artefacts, VR, AR and interactive media

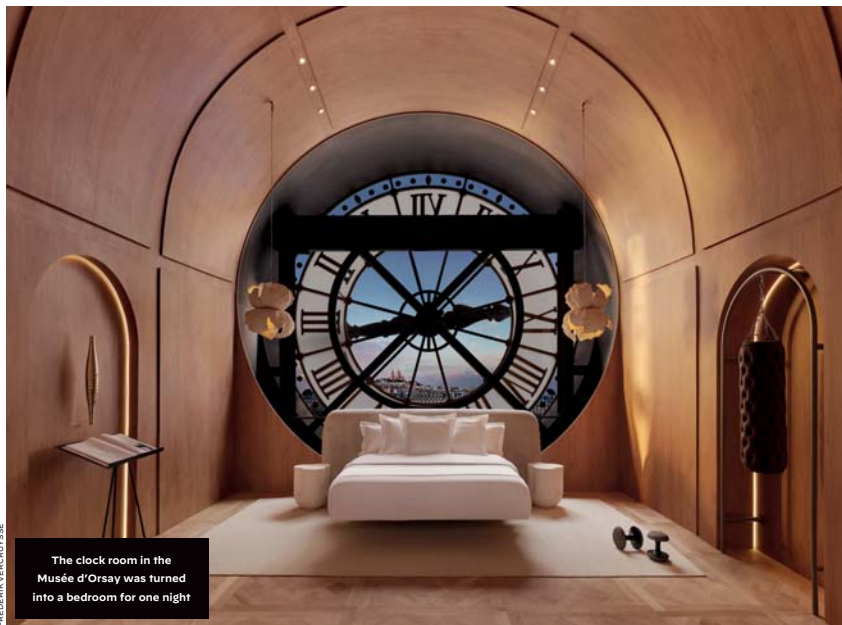


As life becomes increasingly digital, we're focused on bringing more magic into the real world

FLIGHT *of* FANCY



Airbnb guests can now stay
in a replica of the house
from the Pixar movie *Up*



The clock room in the Musée d'Orsay was turned into a bedroom for one night

Airbnb believes there's a big market in experiences, and is highlighting its ambitions with some unusual offers that include a chance to stay in the house from *Up* and sleep in the Musée D'Orsay's clockroom



Airbnb's Brian Chesky



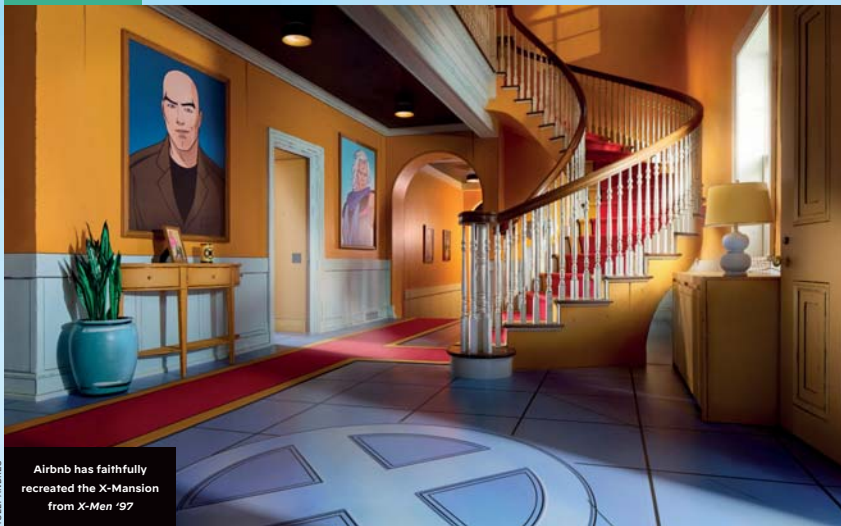
airbnb has launched a new category of experiences called Icons, offering a range of immersive experiences that include the chance to stay in the floating house from the Pixar movie *Up* – complete with 8,000 balloons – which can be suspended from a crane 50ft above the ground.

Other experiences include a visit to the X-Mansion from *X-Men '97*, the chance to sleep behind the iconic Musée D'Orsay clock in Paris (complete with a balcony from which guests could watch the Olympic opening ceremony), a trip with Kevin Hart to his Coramino Live Lounge speakeasy and a stay in the Ferrari Museum in Italy with VIP tickets for the Emilia Romagna Grand Prix.

EXTRAORDINARY EXPERIENCES

"Icons take you inside worlds that only existed in your imagination – until now," says Airbnb co-founder Brian Chesky.

"As life becomes increasingly digital, we're focused on bringing more magic into the real world. With Icons, we've created the most extraordinary experiences on Earth."



HOLLY ANDRES

Airbnb has faithfully recreated the X-Mansion from *X-Men '97*



The X-Mansion has been brought to life in Westchester, New York

HEATHER STEN



The X-Mansion hosts an immersive experience featuring actors and activities

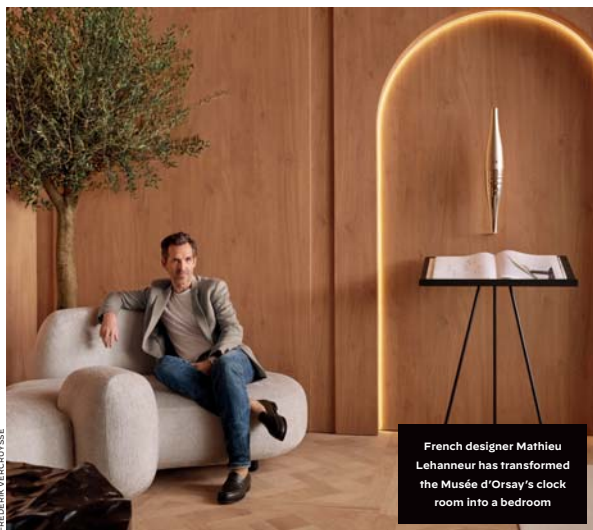


- Guests can also spend the day at the *Inside Out 2* Headquarters, visit Edna Mair's home from *The Incredibles* and stay in Prince's Minneapolis house, as featured in *Purple Rain*.

As well as the chance to visit these properties, guests also take part in a range of experiences. As part of their stay at the Ferrari Museum in Italy, they do a lap of Ferrari's private racetrack with a professional driver and guests staying in the X-Mansion replica get a tour from actors playing X-Men in training and take part in combat training run by a stunt man in the danger room.

Experiences are a rising priority for Airbnb, according to Chesky and the launch of the Icons experiences seems to be designed to raise brand awareness rather than as a revenue generator – each experience is free or under \$100 (£80). However, according to Chesky, the long-term vision is to focus on offering experiences that “capture people's imagination” to millions of Airbnb users.

The launch of Icons follows the success of other one-offs, including the chance to stay in the Musée du Louvre in Paris,



French designer Mathieu Lehanneur has transformed the Musée d'Orsay's clock room into a bedroom

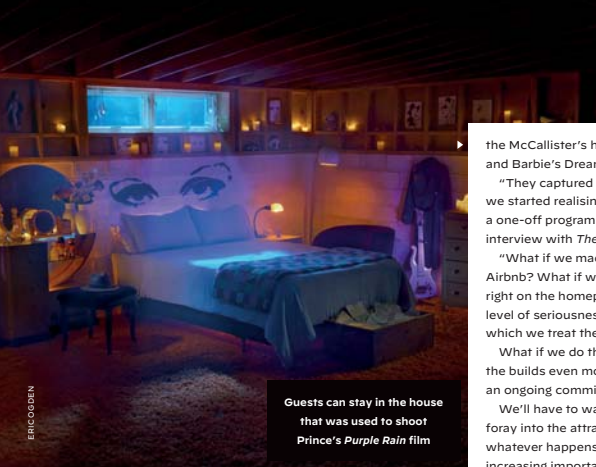


FEDERICO CIAMETI

Guests have the chance to
game with TikTok star Khaby
Lame in his gaming loft



FEDERICO CIAMETI



ERIC COGDEN

Guests can stay in the house that was used to shoot Prince's *Purple Rain* film

the McCallister's home from *Home Alone* and Barbie's Dreamhouse in Malibu.

"They captured people's imagination and we started realising, what if this wasn't just a one-off programme?" Chesky said, in an interview with *The Hollywood Reporter*.

"What if we made this a whole product on Airbnb? What if we gave it its own category right on the homepage and gave it the same level of seriousness and treatment with which we treat the rest of the product?"

What if we do that more frequently, make the builds even more fantastic and just make an ongoing commitment to doing this?"

We'll have to wait to see how Airbnb's foray into the attractions sector plays out, but whatever happens, this certainly highlights the increasing importance placed on experiences. ●




RYAN LOWERY

The house from *Up* can be suspended high above the ground by a crane



DAMIAN MALONEY

IMMERSIVE EXPERIENCE

A woman with long, wavy hair is wearing a blue HTC Vive VR headset. She has a wide-eyed, open-mouthed expression of surprise or awe. Her hands are raised in front of her, palms facing forward. The background is dark and out of focus. The overall lighting is cool and blue-toned.

***At the end of the year, we want
to be on our visitors' lists of
most memorable experiences***

Technology is combined with
live actors and effects to
create impactful experiences

Andrew McGuinness

As Layered Reality prepares to launch its much talked about Elvis Evolution holographic experience this autumn, Magali Robathan speaks to the company founder about holograms, emotion and the business of creating memories



PHOTO: KAREN LEWIS

Tell me about Layered Reality

My background is in advertising and marketing and communications – over the years I built a couple of businesses, sold those and then paid for myself to go to Harvard Business School.

I started reading a lot about the experience economy and the fact that people increasingly want to spend their money on attractions and experiences rather than material things. It struck me that while there is this real hunger for new and different experiences, most of what's on offer within the leisure market is very similar to what was available 20 or 30 years ago.

I started to get really energised about the opportunity to use technology to create a different experience that would be really memorable for people. I launched my digital and theatrical entertainment business, which was then called Ellipsis Entertainment and is now Layered Reality.

You launched Jeff Wayne's The War of the Worlds: The Immersive Experience in 2019. How did that come about?

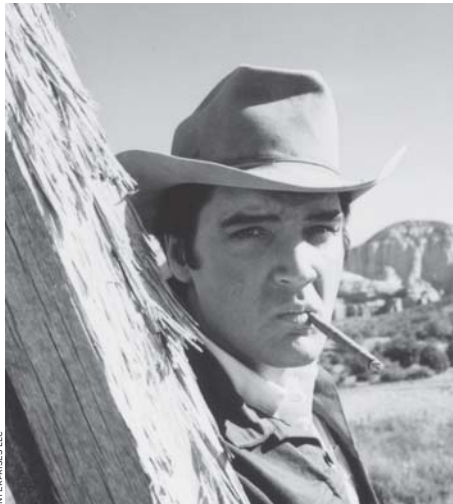
We did a proof of concept called Somnai in a warehouse in east London, which was an immersive virtual reality experience exploring our relationship with sleep. The team behind Jeff Wayne's Musical Version of The War of the Worlds were among the 17,000 people who came to that experience. They loved it, and we began a dialogue about creating something together. ▶



IMMERSIVE EXPERIENCE

***We want people to forget about
the technology and feel the joy of
watching Elvis perform for them***

Layered Reality is
partnering with The Mill to
create an 'authentic Elvis'



What were the biggest challenges?

The first real challenge was convincing people to invest in something that didn't really have many reference points – we were fortunate to get some great investors. Then of course, there were all sorts of technical challenges.

In The War of the Worlds Immersive Experience, we use holograms, virtual reality and sophisticated sound. There were many technical and operational challenges involved.

One of the big challenges is the volume of people moving through the experience and the timings. Every 10 minutes, a new group starts their journey. If there is a delay with one group, that can have a big knock-on effect, so you have to design it very carefully.

You launched the Gunpowder Plot immersive experience at the Tower of London in 2022. How did that come about?

We began a conversation with Historic Palaces not long after The War of the Worlds Immersive Experience opened. Historic Palaces had an ambition to use different forms of storytelling to bring history to life. We worked with the curatorial teams to decide what might be the best story to tell and ultimately landed on the Gunpowder Plot. It's a thrilling story that allows guests to have a very clear and active role – to be spies infiltrating the plotters and then to make the decision about whether they're going to join the plotters or betray them, condemning them to death.



Elvis Evolution will see small groups move through intricate scenes

Being able to run that experience within a space that was actually part of that history is extraordinary – you've got the history in the walls of the place and you can't quite tell where the sets begin and the building ends.

Where did the idea for the Elvis Evolution come from?

It came from us initially. We were in discussions with Authentic Brands Group about something else and we realised that they had the rights to Elvis Presley's IP. We immediately thought, what an incredible experience it would be to walk in Elvis' shoes, and to watch him perform.

Our aim is to help people see behind the myth of Elvis to who he really was.

What will visitors experience?

Small groups will walk in Elvis' footsteps, moving through intricate scenes created using a range of technology – which they hopefully won't be too conscious of – theatrical sets and live actors. The journey will start in rural Mississippi, where they'll learn about the small town that Elvis grew up in and the musical influences of the time, and visitors will then travel to 1940s Memphis to experience what it would have been like for him to move to the city as a teenager.

Visitors will 'travel' to different places within America, mimicking the route that the Elvis

took. As they walk in his footsteps, they'll be exposed to the musical and cultural influences that shaped him. At the end of the journey, they'll get to see Elvis perform in an intimate concert.

People will have a whole, extraordinary night out – they'll eat with us, drink with us, and in the bar after the experience, we'll have an after party show with live music performed by contemporary artists celebrating Elvis' music.

How did you set about designing the experience?

Once again, we're using our approach of building layers into the experience, so we'll have live actors interacting with visitors and intricate sets, as well as all sorts of technology, including holographic techniques, VR, AI and projection mapping. We'll also add in physical sensations – you'll feel the humidity of a cotton field in Mississippi, for example.

How are you creating the concert?

We've got this incredible opportunity to use hours and hours of home-video footage of Elvis performing – we effectively feed that into a computer with very high processing

power and use that to create new authentic performances of Elvis. The result is not a fabrication; it's born of his performance. So for example, if a piece of footage had been shot from the front, the AR would allow us to see what that would have looked like from behind.

Do you have a venue?

We do, but we can't announce it yet. It's a central London venue. When visitors arrive, they'll go into a themed F&B diner where they'll immediately be taken back to 1960s America. At their allotted time, they'll enter the story – which will be a movie-length experience – somewhere between an hour and half and two hours and will include a half time break in another themed F&B space.

How big will the groups be?

We're still finalising the group sizes – they'll be slightly larger groups than we've had up until now, but still relatively small. It's going to be an intimate experience.

What do you want visitors to feel when they take part in the experience?

Ultimately, we're in the memory business. At the end of the year, we want to be on the list of our visitors' most memorable experiences. Exposing people to multi-sensory effects, having a density of experiences in a short period of time, going



The Gunpowder Plot
immersive experience
was launched in May 2022



The experiences employ digital technology, live actors and multi-sensory effects

through highs and lows of emotions, having group experiences – all of these help build memories. We want people to feel an emotional connection to Elvis, and to see beyond the clichés.

At the concert we'll be encouraging people to step out of themselves, let go and have fun. We want them to just feel the joy of being in that concert; of having this incredible shared experience of seeing Elvis perform for them. We want them to forget about the technology and the techniques we've used, and just enjoy themselves.

What else are you working on?

We're very focused on Elvis Evolution at the moment, but we do also have a pipeline of stories that we'd love people to be able to be part of. We're finding that many of the big name IP holders are keen to work with us, because we can point to the quality of what we've done and the fact that we have the ambition to scale and take these experiences to the US and beyond. ●

What is Layered Reality?

Layered Reality combines the latest digital technology (virtual reality, projection mapping and volumetric holograms) together with live theatre (live actors, movie-scale sets, and special effects) plus real physical sensations (touch, temperature, smell, sound and music, physical movement, and taste) to create a unique immersive experience that's truly memorable.

"Because you've got your nose smelling something your eyes are seeing and then you can see a 150-foot Martian fighting machine, you're really convinced that you're in that place," says Layered Reality CEO Andrew McGuinness.

"You get a much more intense experience than you could ever have with one single layer. It's by bringing those layers together that your body and mind convince you that this is real."

I had a flood of images pouring into my mind – they were combinations of immersive art and bathing elements. It was wondrous and magical

Meow Wolf co-founder
Corvas Brinkerhoff is behind
the Submersive concept

Corvas Brinkerhoff

Immersive art, neuroscience, AI and social bathing are set to come together in a disruptive new spa attraction concept from the co-founder of Meow Wolf. Katie Barnes talks with the man behind the idea

Imagine you're lying in a warm saltwater pool, gently floating and gazing at astral projections, while listening to underwater sounds in sequence with the images. On top of this, every detail has been meticulously and scientifically developed to transport you into an elevated state of consciousness. And there isn't just one room, there are 12. And each is designed to induce a different heightened emotion – whether that's awe, wonder, euphoria, inspiration, connection or transcendence.

It sounds otherworldly and fantastical. But the concept is coming to market and is set to disrupt both the attractions and the wellness industries. Submersive is billed as the world's first immersive art bathhouse. The 25,000sq ft facility is due to open in Austin, Texas in 2026 – but we can expect 11 more worldwide.

Submersive brings together elements of a traditional spa such as therapeutic thermal pools, steam and sauna rooms, waterfalls, grottos, floatation and – importantly – cooler options for multiple contrast bathing possibilities and amplifies them with thought-provoking art installations, AI technology, lighting, video and sound effects.

From attractions to spa

Corvas Brinkerhoff, co-founder of Meow Wolf – the company behind mind-bending interactive art and entertainment installations across the US – is the creator of Submersive.

Yet while he's made a name for himself in the attractions industry, his passion for wellness has been bubbling under for the past 15 years.

"Early on in my career I had an obsession with creating immersive experiences," he says. "I was always asking – what if artwork came off the walls and surrounded you? What if this world had a story behind it and people who inhabited it?"

"But parallel to this, I had a deepening love for contrast therapy. It wasn't popular at the time and the science behind it wasn't well known, but I knew that every time I did it I felt amazing."

In fact, his epiphany for Submersive even came in a bathhouse relaxation room, following a rigorous series of hot-cold circuits. "I had a flood of images pouring into my mind," he recalls, "they were combinations of immersive art and bathing elements. It was wondrous and magical."

Brinkerhoff put the notion on the back burner to concentrate on Meow Wolf but added to the cluster of ideas over the next decade and a half until he felt the time was right to make a move. "This is about me stepping into a sense of purpose in my lifetime," he explains.

Over the last year, he gained further insight by visiting 17 bathhouses worldwide. In Japan, he was illuminated by the deep-rooted onsen culture and in western Europe, he was struck by the architecture and inventive bathing experiences. "It was almost like an embarrassment of riches because I received so much inspiration," he declares. ▶



PHOTO: LIA BRICE COURTESY OF SUBMERSIVE

The 12 rooms will each induce a different emotion

*This is an art creation that you
can literally submerge yourself
into and that heals you*

► State-change machine

The blueprint for Submersive is based on 12 rooms that “each have a distinct and powerful combination of multisensory elements” around a main communal space, says Brinkerhoff. Hot and cold exposure, with its proven therapeutic benefits, underpins the journey and every aspect, from the varying pool temperatures, intensity of steam and sauna to lighting, sound and visuals, has been intentionally designed to get people feeling a certain way. “It’s essentially a massive state-change machine,” he says. “An art creation that you can literally submerge yourself into and that heals you.”

The first phase of development is scheduled for completion in 2026. After proof of concept, Brinkerhoff plans to double the size of the facility in 2028, adding more immersive environments and other amenities.

Initially, Submersive will be able to accommodate 80 people at a time, with capacity going up to 180 once fully complete. There will be a timed entry and a choice of three-hour, five-hour or full-day experiences. Price points, says Brinkerhoff, will start at

US\$60 (€55, £47) and the average ticket cost will sit at US\$88 (€81, £69). The goal is to attract up to 200,000 visitors a year.

Integrating science and technology

When it first opens, guests will get to choose their route around the bathhouse depending on how they feel or want to feel. But behind the scenes, Submersive is looking to create an AI-powered questionnaire that will be used to prescribe a recommended sequence.

It’s this integration of technology, along with its scientific approach, which makes the concept stand out. Firstly, Submersive is planning to use the principles from neuroaesthetics to inform its design and it’s partnering with the International Arts + Mind Lab at Johns Hopkins University for expert guidance. Neuroaesthetics is a field which studies how aesthetic elements, particularly visual arts, positively impact the brain. Biophilic architecture is one well-known area that Brinkerhoff and his team will be tapping into, but they’ll also consider how different images and the way they’re displayed play into the brain’s reward system. ►



The 25,000sq ft space in Austin, Texas will feature 12 unique bathing rooms set around a main gathering space



Brinkerhoff helped
create unique immersive
experiences for Meow Wolf

► Secondly – and possibly the most innovative aspect of its proposition – Submersive’s environments will actually be experiments in themselves. “Our goal is to amass the world’s deepest understanding of how multisensory experiences affect us on a physiological level,” says Brinkerhoff. Spearheaded by lead scientific advisor Beau Lotto, Submersive will periodically test the impact of its rooms on volunteers using wearables such as mobile EEG headsets and heart rate sensors. These findings will give valuable biofeedback data that Submersive will then integrate into its audiovisual systems and the design process.

“Each environment is designed to get guests into a different state so there’s an inherent hypothesis we’re testing,” explains Brinkerhoff, “to see how the efficacy of that room compares with our intended outcome. Then we’re also studying how all of these rooms affect people and how different sequences moving through them can affect them.”

He adds: “We could just create the world’s coolest bathhouse and make it really interesting, but the science uncovers a deep understanding of how these elements affect us and with that comes the ability to offer profoundly impactful experiences.”

Big ambitions

The Submersive concept is the latest in a series of projects and ideas that see the worlds of attractions and spa overlapping.

“I think we’ll see a lot more people bringing together immersive and wellness experiences in the future,” says Brinkerhoff.

He shares that Submersive’s roadmap is to have 12 properties globally within the next 10 years. “We plan to start working on our second location soon after opening the first and have ambitions to grow quickly,” he says, stating that beyond the US, western Europe and Japan will be a priority.

“Underneath it all, this is about creating spaces that show us an elevated way of being, that illuminates a part of ourselves,” he concludes. “We want to bring that to as many people as possible. There’s so much power in having an experience that shows you what’s possible.” ●





Corvas Brinkerhoff

Brinkerhoff co-founded arts and entertainment company Meow Wolf in 2008 with Sean Di Ianni, Matt King, Emily Montoya, Caity Kennedy, Benji Geary, and Vince Kadlubek. An artist, designer and technologist, Brinkerhoff took on the role of chief technology officer at Meow Wolf in 2014, before becoming executive creative director and then senior VP of experience design.



In May 2024, Brinkerhoff announced he was leaving Meow Wolf in order to launch immersive art spa Submersive.

Submersive is described as a new bathhouse concept that takes visitors “beyond relaxation into elevated states of consciousness including awe, wonder, inspiration, transcendence, euphoria, and hyper-presence”.

The first Submersive spa is set to open in Austin, Texas from 2026.

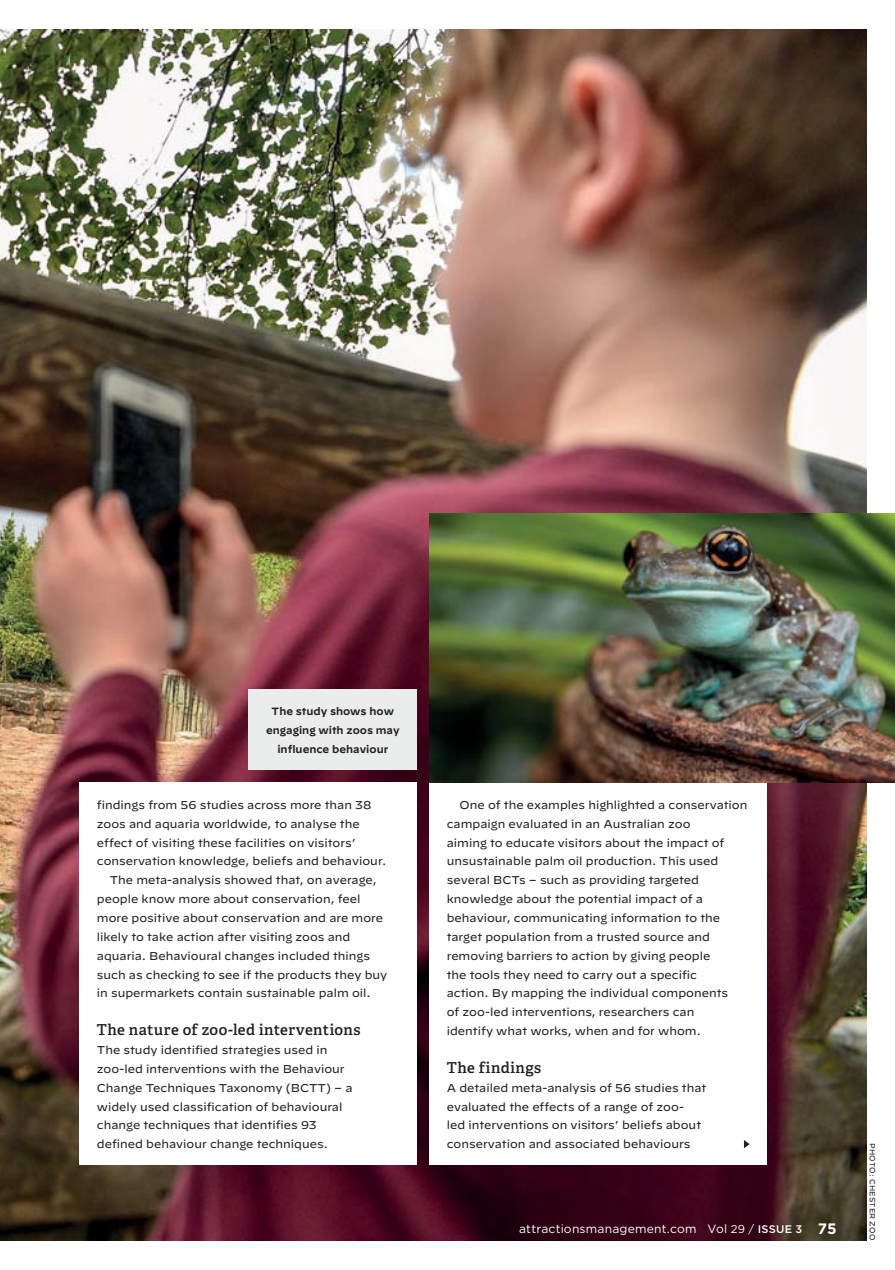
Making a difference

As zoos face increasing pressure to demonstrate measurable impacts on their visitors and society, a new study demonstrates how visits can influence positive behavioural changes

Zoos have huge potential to connect visitors with the issues facing biodiversity globally and many deliver interventions that seek to influence visitors' beliefs and behaviours with respect to conservation. However, despite primary studies evaluating the effect of such interventions, the overall effect of engaging with zoos and the factors that influence this effect have remained unclear.

As zoos face pressure to demonstrate their contribution to addressing the global environmental crisis, clarity is needed on how visiting and engaging with zoos may influence their visitors.

With this in mind, researchers at the University of Sheffield in the UK, working in collaboration with Chester Zoo (UK), brought together



The study shows how engaging with zoos may influence behaviour

findings from 56 studies across more than 38 zoos and aquaria worldwide, to analyse the effect of visiting these facilities on visitors' conservation knowledge, beliefs and behaviour.

The meta-analysis showed that, on average, people know more about conservation, feel more positive about conservation and are more likely to take action after visiting zoos and aquaria. Behavioural changes included things such as checking to see if the products they buy in supermarkets contain sustainable palm oil.

The nature of zoo-led interventions

The study identified strategies used in zoo-led interventions with the Behaviour Change Techniques Taxonomy (BCTT) – a widely used classification of behavioural change techniques that identifies 93 defined behaviour change techniques.

One of the examples highlighted a conservation campaign evaluated in an Australian zoo aiming to educate visitors about the impact of unsustainable palm oil production. This used several BCTs – such as providing targeted knowledge about the potential impact of a behaviour, communicating information to the target population from a trusted source and removing barriers to action by giving people the tools they need to carry out a specific action. By mapping the individual components of zoo-led interventions, researchers can identify what works, when and for whom.

The findings

A detailed meta-analysis of 56 studies that evaluated the effects of a range of zoo-led interventions on visitors' beliefs about conservation and associated behaviours ▶

- found that visiting and engaging with zoos had a positive impact on outcomes, including knowledge about conservation issues, attitudes toward conservation, visitors' self-efficacy, intentions to act, and conservation behaviour.

These findings support other meta-analyses that suggest conservation education can affect outcomes that may influence conservation behaviour. Taken together, the findings attest to the potential of zoos to promote conservation and shift beliefs in zoo visitors.

The research found that, on average, interventions involving formal education had a large effect on visitors' beliefs about conservation and behaviour. General visits and live animal interactions had a small to medium effect, while interventions that involved changing exhibit designs had a small effect on outcomes.

Zoo-led interventions typically had a medium effect on knowledge and intentions, a small to medium effect on attitudes and self-efficacy, and a small effect on behaviour.

Three variables significantly influenced the effect of zoo-led interventions on outcomes: design of the study, whether the research

PHOTO: CHESTER ZOO



was conducted at multiple institutions, and the percentage of females in the sample. Specifically, studies with within-participant designs typically reported larger effects than studies with between-participants designs. Research conducted at a single institution typically reported larger effects than research conducted at multiple institutions. Finally, studies with samples containing a higher percentage of females typically reported smaller effects than studies with a smaller percentage of females.

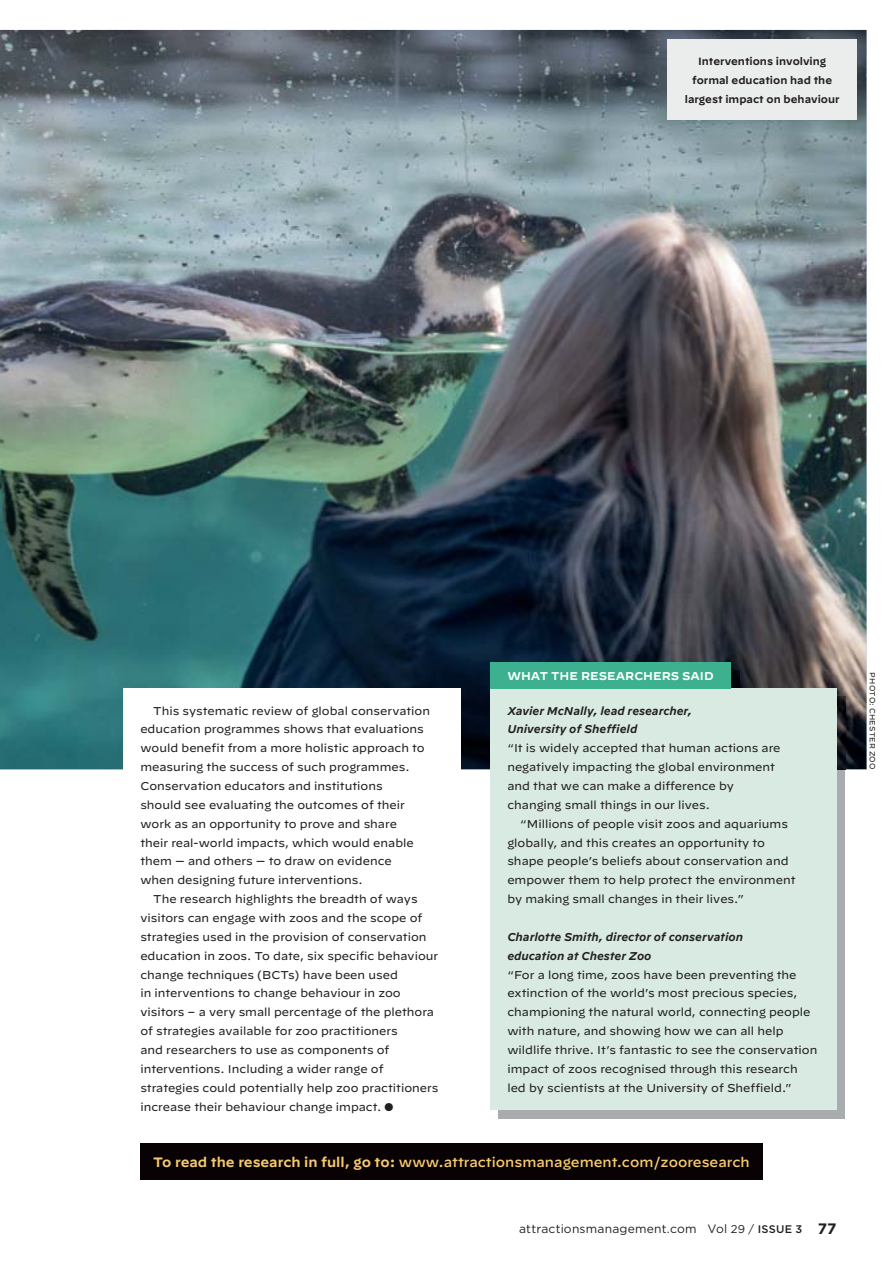
Recognising the opportunities

Conservation education, included in some of the zoo-led interventions in the review, is typically used to raise awareness about a specific conservation issue, often in the hope that people will be subsequently more likely to act for the benefit of biodiversity.



The study was carried out by the University of Sheffield and Chester Zoo

PHOTO: CHESTER ZOO



Interventions involving
formal education had the
largest impact on behaviour

This systematic review of global conservation education programmes shows that evaluations would benefit from a more holistic approach to measuring the success of such programmes. Conservation educators and institutions should see evaluating the outcomes of their work as an opportunity to prove and share their real-world impacts, which would enable them – and others – to draw on evidence when designing future interventions.

The research highlights the breadth of ways visitors can engage with zoos and the scope of strategies used in the provision of conservation education in zoos. To date, six specific behaviour change techniques (BCTs) have been used in interventions to change behaviour in zoo visitors – a very small percentage of the plethora of strategies available for zoo practitioners and researchers to use as components of interventions. Including a wider range of strategies could potentially help zoo practitioners increase their behaviour change impact. ●

WHAT THE RESEARCHERS SAID

**Xavier McNally, lead researcher,
University of Sheffield**

"It is widely accepted that human actions are negatively impacting the global environment and that we can make a difference by changing small things in our lives.

"Millions of people visit zoos and aquariums globally, and this creates an opportunity to shape people's beliefs about conservation and empower them to help protect the environment by making small changes in their lives."

**Charlotte Smith, director of conservation
education at Chester Zoo**

"For a long time, zoos have been preventing the extinction of the world's most precious species, championing the natural world, connecting people with nature, and showing how we can all help wildlife thrive. It's fantastic to see the conservation impact of zoos recognised through this research led by scientists at the University of Sheffield."

To read the research in full, go to: www.attractionsmanagement.com/zooresearch

VERTICAL

New York's Summit
One Vanderbilt offers an
"extraordinary experience"



REALITY

Humans have been fascinated by tall towers for thousands of years and now a new generation of vertical attractions is shaking things up. Dr Terry Stevens investigates the phenomenon



In the past few years have seen a surge of interest in the development of a new generation of vertical attractions, as destinations around the world

seek to enhance their appeal to tourists.

Vertical visitor attractions have existed for centuries, of course. The Blackpool Tower entertainment complex is one of the best known and most loved landmarks in England, while the Eiffel Tower is synonymous with Paris. Vertical attractions can be found on remote mountain tops, in coastal resorts, and in the centre of capital cities.

These structures, by their nature, stand out in their environments. Their design can often divide opinion and generate strong emotions. Their innovative design, method of construction, and nature of the visitor experience makes them 'game-changers.' They have to be unique to truly succeed. ▶

► The awe factor

What's the appeal of these high-rise experiences for visitors? It's all about the awe factor.

In many ways, these are the ultimate adventure experience delivered in a safe and controlled environment. The experiences touch raw emotions – both fear and pleasure. They're out of the ordinary, they're powerful and they create memorable moments. In many cases they're a new form of high-rise entertainment that has re-imagined a traditional form of the vertical visitor attraction.

For some visitors it may also be about religious analogies such as getting closer to God (or another great deity), transcendence, omnipotence, achieving a God's eye view of the world. These experiences play to a basic human instinct to understand our place in the wider scheme of things, combining pure aesthetic, inquisitiveness, escaping the everyday, seeing the world in a different way and enjoying the spectacle.

It will be powered by solar panels integrated into the mast and an urban windmill at the top of the tower

In some instances, vertical attractions have purposefully set out to promote physical activity by creating innovative opportunities and media-focused events and challenges, such as vertical running with the Vertical World Circle and Championships, the Skyrunning Championships, and International Stairclimbing Competitions, each with their own governing body for their respective sports.

The future of high rise leisure

There's a surge of interest in developing observation towers and high-rise viewpoints in rural as well as urban settings across the world.

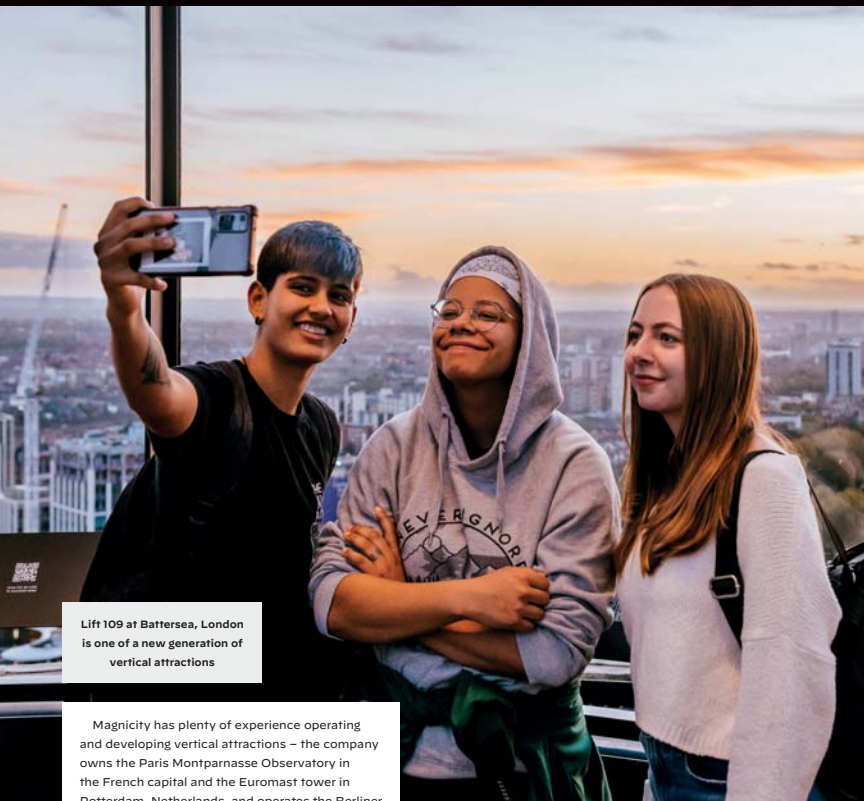
The clamour to find the next generation of vertical attractions has given rise to the unique Spiral Tower concept, billed as the future of urban leisure.

Its designers claim it will be the world's first climate-neutral high-rise attraction, featuring transparent electric passenger cabins spiralling up and down its façade, and vertical gardens. It will be powered by solar panels integrated into the mast and an urban windmill at the top of the tower.

In 2023, leading high rise attraction operator and owner Magnicity acquired the patent for Spiral Tower and announced its collaboration with design company Northern Light and Groenendijk Engineering for the international development of the tower.



The Spiral Tower is billed as the world's first climate-neutral high rise attraction



Lift 109 at Battersea, London
is one of a new generation of
vertical attractions

Magnicity has plenty of experience operating and developing vertical attractions – the company owns the Paris Montparnasse Observatory in the French capital and the Euromast tower in Rotterdam, Netherlands, and operates the Berliner Fernsehturm (TV Tower), the 360 Chicago Observation Deck in the US and De Zalmhaven 1 tower in Rotterdam, the Netherlands.

Magnicity is also behind plans to create a new European destination at the top of the Foster + Partners-designed Varso Tower in Warsaw, Poland, the tallest skyscraper in the EU. The owner of Varso Tower, HB Reavis, recently announced that it had selected Magnicity to manage the top three floors of the building.

The Magnicity site at the 310m-high Varso Tower will include a tree-lined terrace on the 49th floor, as well as a rooftop located at the top of the tower on the 53rd floor, offering visitors a unique panoramic view of Warsaw, an immersive experience, and a large bar facing its rooftop garden and the famous Palace of Culture and Science.

Magnicity is developing an
attractions concept for Varso
Tower in Warsaw, Poland





The Kenzo Digital-designed room filled with inflatable silver balloons at Summit

Original experiences

The past few years have seen the opening of a range of jaw-dropping viewing experiences worldwide. These include Lift 109 at Battersea Power Station and Horizon 22 in London; Sky Views Dubai; The Beam at the Rockefeller Building and the Elevator Ride at 1 World Trade Centre – both in New York.

One of the most exciting developments has been the Summit One Vanderbilt in New York City. This extraordinary immersive experience was designed by Kohn Pedersen Fox and sits above floor 73 of the Midtown Manhattan skyscraper, One Vanderbilt – New York's fourth-tallest building.

Summit One Vanderbilt, allegedly costing US\$39m and spanning 6,683sq m, consists of four components. The first part, Rise, has three high-speed Schindler 7000 series elevators, which take visitors from the Grand Central Terminal level to the observation area 310m above ground in less than 50 seconds. The second part, Air, is an

extraordinary art installation featuring mirrors and shape-changing sculptures by Yayoi Kusama.

Next comes Levitation, comprising two enclosed glass balconies protruding from the façade, while the final part, Ascent, takes guests to the top of the building in two all-glass outside elevators. The interior of the top floor features a glass parapet and a bar, as well as an 'infinity room' containing a 12m high ceiling and an interactive art exhibit created by Kenzo Digital. The experience includes Après – a Snøhetta-designed, Nordic-inspired restaurant.

The boutique approach

While some countries have gone for the drama of supertall towers with jaw-dropping installations, Slovenia has taken a different approach, with a series of rural, relatively modest tower attractions, that are nonetheless impactful, creatively designed and well executed. These are highly appropriate for this small country that positions itself as boutique and green.



IMAGE: NEGATIV



The Freedom Plaza, designed by Bjarke Ingels Group

TYPES OF VERTICAL ATTRACTIONS

Stand-alone vertical structures with observation deck

● Traditional structures

Examples include the Eiffel Tower, Paris, France; the Wallace Monument, Stirling, Scotland; the Statue of Liberty, New York, USA.

● Contemporary structures

Examples include the Crystal Tower, Rogaska Slatina, Slovenia; The Vessel, New York, USA; Birštonas, Lithuania; Lookout Tower, Bruneck, Italy; Swan Bells Tower, Perth, Australia; Sauvebelin Tower, Lausanne, Switzerland; BIG's Marsk Tower, Esbjerg, Denmark; Tower of Health and Joy, Podcetrtek, Slovenia.

Vertical attractions with additional amenities

Examples include the Aalborg Tower, Aalborg, Denmark; i360 Brighton, Sussex, England; Ancelormittal Orbit, Olympic Park, London; the Circuit of Americas Tower, Austin, Texas, USA; Blackpool Tower, Blackpool, England.

Vertical attractions that are part of another vertical structure built for another reason

Examples include BT Tower, London, England; CN Tower, Toronto, Canada; John Hancock Building, Chicago, USA; Liverpool Radio City, England; Dubai Creek Tower, Dubai; Space Needle, Seattle, Canada; The Sydney Tower, Australia; The Berlin Tower, Germany; The Stratosphere Tower, Las Vegas, USA; Sky Tower, Auckland, New Zealand; Danube Tower, Vienna, Austria.

Vertical attraction within mixed-use developments

Examples include A'DAM, Amsterdam, Netherlands; the Spinnaker Tower, Portsmouth, England; the Shard, London, England; SAIL City, Bremerhaven, Germany; Sky Deck, Willis Tower, Chicago, United States; Sky Tree, Tokyo, Japan; Lift109 Battersea Power Station, London, UK.

Hybrids, a new generation of vertical attraction

This new generation of high rise leisure towers include Vista Park, Saleske Doline, Slovenia; La Machine, Toulouse & Nantes, France; CopenHill, Copenhagen, Denmark; the Globe Arena, Stockholm, Sweden; London Eye, London, England; Gardens by the Bay, Singapore; Rainbow Walk, AROS, Aarhus, Denmark; Ba Na Hills, Vietnam; Sky Bridge, Petronas Towers, Kuala Lumpur.

Following the success of the Vinarium Tower in Lendava, Slovenia – which opened in 2015 and has attracted many tourists to the area – the country has fully embraced the vertical attraction concept.

The latest to open is Kristal Tower, which opened in May 2024 in the Slovenian spa resort of Rogaska Slatina. At 106m, the €5m tower is the tallest structure in Slovenia; it features a closed viewing platform and an open outdoor rooftop observatory. Open year-round, the project aims to attract 60,000 visitors a year thus boosting the overall appeal of the resort and injecting €600,000 into the local economy.

Visitors to the concrete, needle-like tower – designed by Ponting Bridges with Koprnik Produkcija – ascend the attraction via elevator, before reaching the viewing platform, created from 500sq metres of glass crystal that's emblematic of the town's heritage. The first floor of the platform features a café and a transparent floor, while the second floor features

Content pays homage to the miners and the visitor experiences are raw, thrilling and physical

a panoramic observation deck and a virtual reality experience that brings to life the story of the legendary winged horse, Pegasus.

An hour north-east, on the shores of Lake Velenja in the Šaleska Valley, another unique vertical attraction anchors a multipurpose public park and 30,000-capacity event space. Vista Park is characterised by a 14m-high climb to a viewing platform the design of which was inspired by the Pozej Dragon, the legendary lake monster. The Vista incorporates a 2,300sq m stage facing the event area, as well as a restaurant, bar and wedding venue.

Personal favourite

If pushed to name my favourite vertical attraction it would be Pyramidenkogel, sitting on an Alpine ridge on the Austrian-Slovenia border near Klagenfurt. With a total height of 100 metres, the Pyramidenkogel is the highest wooden viewing tower in the world. From the Pyramidenkogel visitors can enjoy impressive wide-ranging views of Austria, Slovenia and Italy. Resting on this is the tower head with the two highest viewing platforms and the glazed Sky Box, used as a café and for

events. Visitors can either ride in a transparent panoramic lift or climb the 441 stairs to the top.

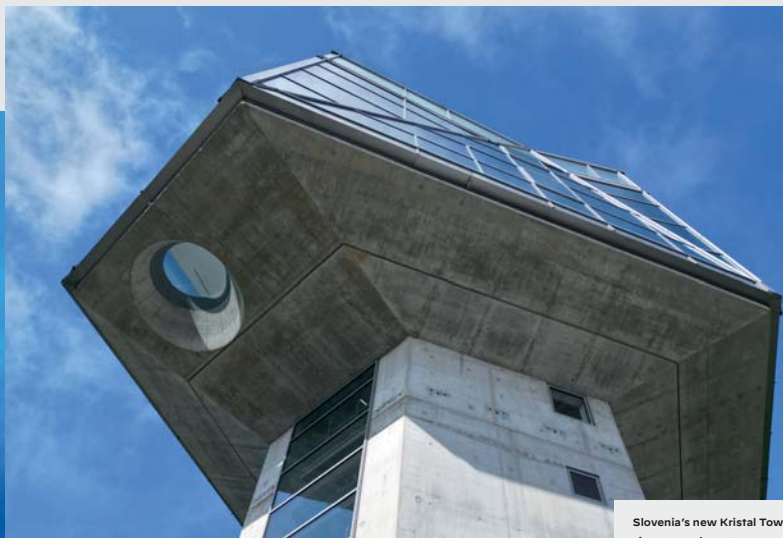
The viewing tower offers a special experience for children – the highest and longest slide in Europe to be incorporated in a building is just waiting to be discovered. From a height of 52 metres within the viewing tower, is the start of Europe's tallest indoor tunnel slide, which shoots down 120 metres to the ground floor reaching speeds of up to 25 kilometres an hour.

What next?

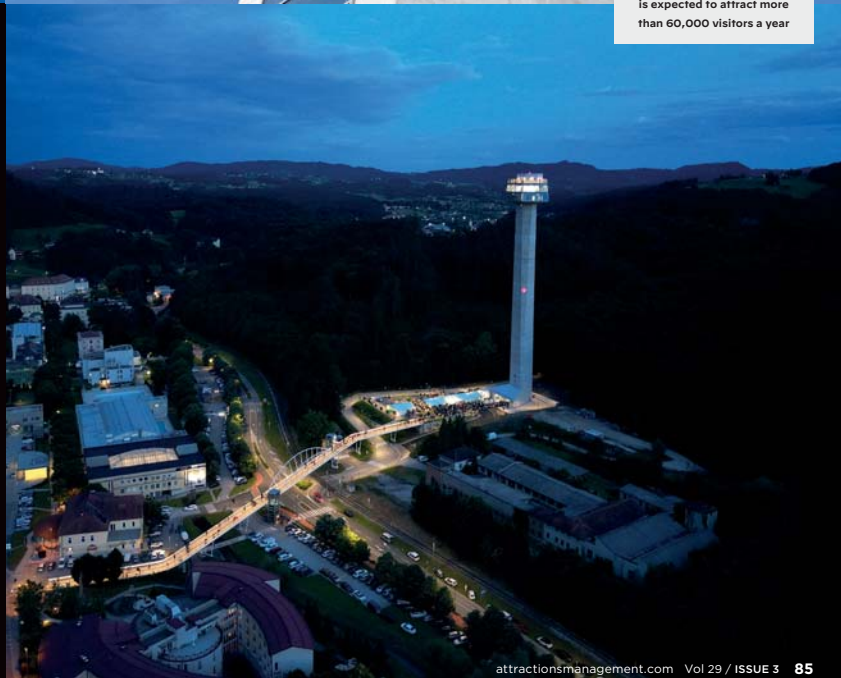
There are many permutations for future 'go-high' attractions – different locations, designs, materials, gravity rides, immersive experiences, and a variety of food and beverage offers. The opportunities are endless.

There will be an increasing emphasis on theming and story-telling alongside the obvious thrill elements. The new Zip World Tower at the former opencast Tower Colliery in South Wales succeeds in merging these two dimensions. Its design echoes the adjacent (now defunct) Pithead Wheel, its content pays homage to the miners, and the visitor experiences are raw, thrilling and physical. ●

Zip World Tower in Wales, UK features the world's fastest seated zip line



Slovenia's new Kristal Tower is expected to attract more than 60,000 visitors a year



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IMAGE: MAURER RIDES



IMAGE: MAURER RIDES

The Sea Stallion will offer a 'wild ride,' according to Maurer Rides' Torsten Schmidt (above)

Maurer Rides supplies interactive coaster for Six Flags Qiddiya City

Ride manufacturer Maurer Rides has announced that its latest Spike Coaster, named Sea Stallion, will feature at Six Flags Qiddiya City in Saudi Arabia.

The Sea Stallion rollercoaster will be located in the Discovery Springs area of the 79 acre theme park. Discovery Springs is one of six lands in the park, and will be themed around the relationship between the desert and the sea. The coaster offers visitors a 'wild ride on a sea stallion through a magical land of waterfalls, caves and geysers'.

The coaster will feature eight vehicles, each seating two people, and reaches a track length of 510 metres. Interactive features include speed control and a boost button, promising a dynamic ride experience. Sea Stallion features duelling sections with a Möbius

layout, enabling a parallel track layout that allows for racing situations between the vehicles.

"The special thing about the design of this ride was to develop a layout that incorporates the terrain and the neighbouring water attraction and thus offers visitors an exciting and varied experience of the elements," said ride designer Torsten Schmidt.

"Six Flags Qiddiya City found the idea of duelling very exciting with the requirement to realise this feature in one layout, which was how the idea of the Möbius loop was born."

The rollercoaster is currently being assembled in Qiddiya City, Saudi Arabia and will be tested over the next few months.



IMAGE: MAURER RIDES

Riders can race one another on the new coaster

[attractions-kit](http://attractions-kit.net) keyword

Maurer Rides



The space-themed attraction was designed for young people



Christie helps power Beijing space experience

A new attraction takes teenagers and young adults on an interactive sci-fi adventure in deep space at the Wonderland Science Fiction Exploration Hall at the ZGC Science Fiction Industry Innovation Center in Beijing.

Visual and AV technology company Christie has revealed that its Widget Designer and Pandoras Box software have been used to power the visuals at the new attraction.

Divided into two themed experiences – Space Rescue and Space Dinosaur Base – the attraction invites participants to engage in specific tasks and games to successfully complete their mission. Space Rescue tasks participants with piloting a replica return capsule, docking with a space station, and restarting a control system at a biological base, while Space Dinosaur Base sees visitors explore a chaotic space dinosaur base.

The attraction uses film industry technology and digital interactive tools from Christie to immerse visitors in the adventures, with Beijing De Yi Jia Chuang Ltd supplying and installing Pandoras Box Software and Widget Designer.

“We’re delighted to be involved in this ground-breaking project, which is part of a larger initiative to develop Beijing’s burgeoning science and technology industry cluster,” said Daiyuan Wang, general manager of Beijing De Yi Jia Chuang.

Christie Pandoras Box was used to facilitate the transition of distinct gaming scene effects for both immersive adventures, integrating multi-scene audio and video content with Widget Designer’s control algorithms. The software is installed in two customised multimedia servers, each dedicated to immersive audio and visual integration for the respective themed experiences.



PHOTO: CHRISTIE

April Qin

“This setup allows for precise control of multi-scene storyline effects and efficient network distribution, ensuring unified reception of multi-channel input/output signals and optimal control of game modules,” said Wang.

April Qin, enterprise senior sales director for China at Christie, said: “We’re thrilled to see Pandoras Box shine at the Wonderland Science Fiction Exploration Hall. This project’s success reinforces the value of our Pandoras Box media and show control systems, particularly in ensuring the reliability of software and hardware for entertainment solutions and live events.”

attractions-kit keyword

Christie

Martin Audio teams up with Crossover at London's Twist Museum

Martin Audio has provided audio equipment for the Twist Museum in London, UK – an immersive, interactive, multi-sensory attraction, set on a 15,000sq ft site.

Challenging the visitor to explore the world of illusion, Twist – which stands for The Way I See Things – is a collaborative work of leading artists, psychologists, and neuroscientists.

The audio-visual integration was entrusted to AV systems design and installation firm Crossover, specifying, installing, programming and commissioning AV equipment for exhibits including the Digital Mirror and the Digital Kaleidoscope.

London's new Twist Museum explores the world of optical illusions

Developed by multimedia artist Aristotle Roufanis, the Digital Mirror exhibit uses a camera and large format display to create an interactive 'mirror', distorting peoples' reflections in real time. The Crossover team provided the displays, the audio system and the back-end processing hardware that manipulates the captured images to display the illusions and distortions to the viewer.

Crossover also helped the museum's project team build another of Roufanis' creations, the mirrored hexagonal tube Digital Kaleidoscope. People entering the tube immerse themselves in a display of colours and patterns and their reflections,

which are influenced by their movements and interactions.

Martin Audio loudspeakers were specified in the Audio Interactive Space and Mind Hub where distortion-free, phase-coherent output was paramount. The former is a large octagonal acoustically treated 360-degree surround-sound room that immerses the visitor in soundscapes created by artist and composer Antoine Bertin. Custom-programmed LED lighting synchronises with the audio to enhance the sensory impact, with LF rumble provided by a Martin Audio SX110 1 x 10in slimline subwoofer.

About halfway through the journey, visitors enter the Mind Hub. Crossover installed the lighting and supplied the lighting control hardware and audio system for the Mind Hub, which features a huge cube of 1,000 individually controllable LED spheres hanging from the ceiling, creating mesmerising patterns. Here and in the events area, Crossover specified eight Martin Audio ADORN A55T.

Elsewhere, the Upside-Down Room features a further Martin Audio music system. ●

[attractions-kit keyword](#)

[Martin Audio](#)



Martin Audio worked with AV design and installation firm Crossover



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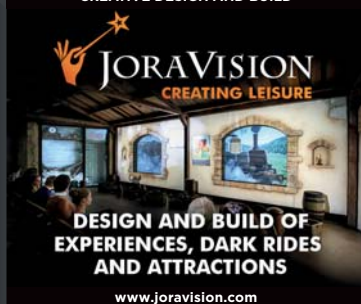
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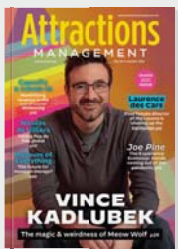
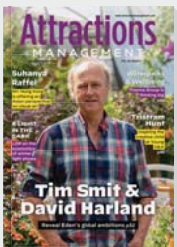
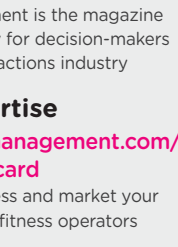
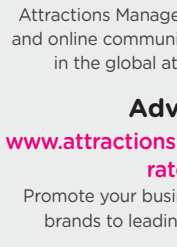
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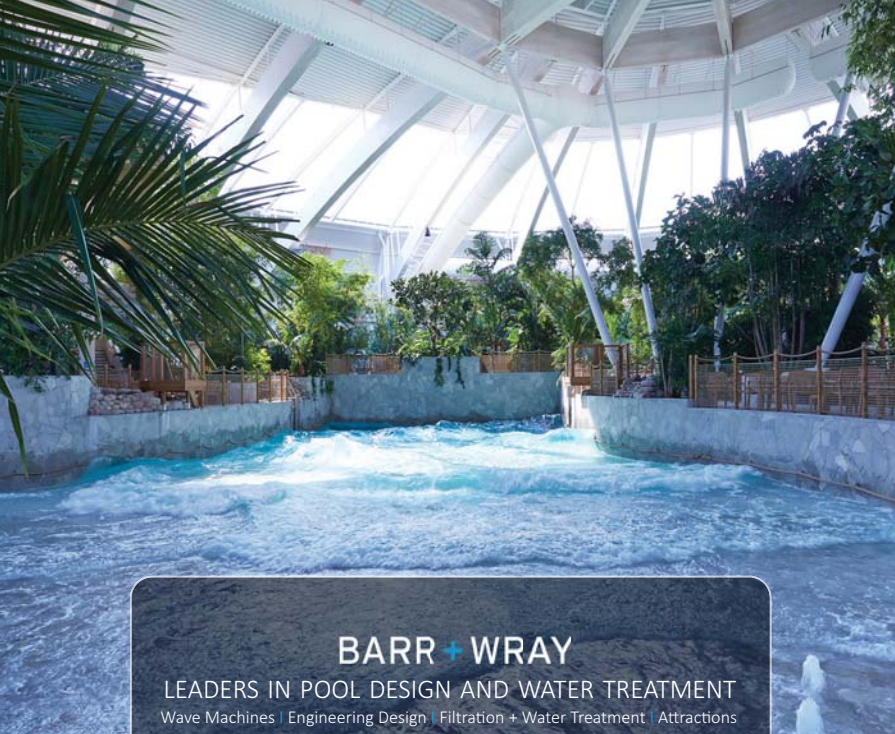
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